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ABSTRACT

The 15 articles in this journal issue deal with children's literature. Among the topics and titles discussed are (1) Virginia Hamilton's books, (2) the new realism in children's literature, (3) gender bias in children's books, (4) teaching "Where the Wild Things Are" to adults, (5) language use in "Alice in Wonderland," (6) "Mom, the Wolf Man and Me," (7) reading to children, (8) "The Mighty Hunter of Paint Creek," (9) classical vision and comic effect in Natalie Babbit's "Knee-Knock Rise and Goody Hall," (10) an author's view of children's literature in the elementary curriculum, (11) a state-wide survey of children's literature instruction, (12) a personal response to "Jacob Have I Loved," (13) folklore in recent Caldecott books, (14) opening the doors of communication through children's literature, and (15) selected poems by fifth graders. (EL)

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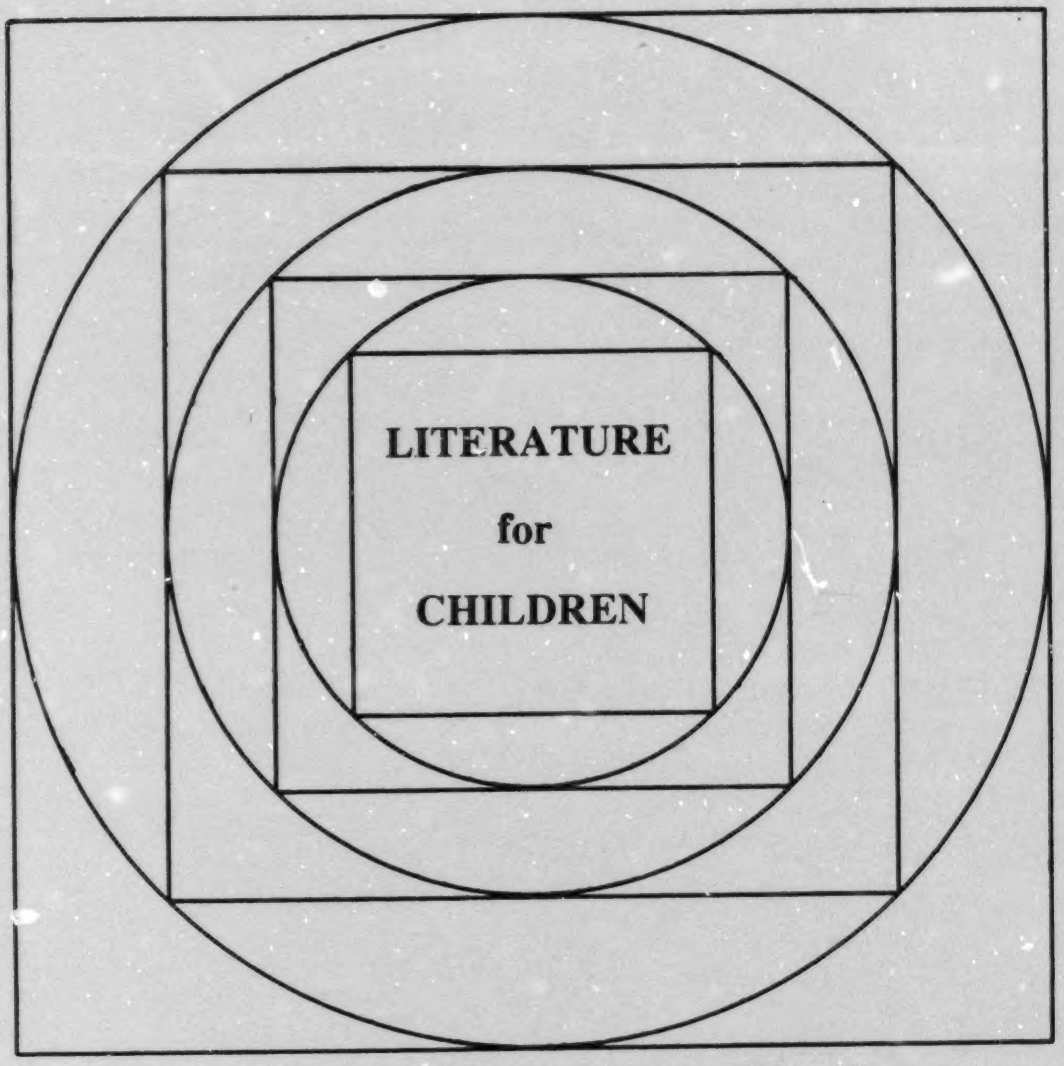

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FOCUS: TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Volume XI SPRING/SUMMER 1985 Number 3

LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN

Contents Page

VIRGINIA HAMILTON: OHIO'S GIFT FROM THE HEARTLAND
June Langford Berkley 1

ERIC/RCS REPORT: THE NEW REALISM IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
Margaret Mier 5

GENDER BIAS IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS
Barbara J. Craig 13

TEACHING WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE TO ADULTS
David D. Mann 17

"WHICH IS TO BE MASTER?"
Richard B. Hitchcock 20

MOM, THE WOLF MAN AND ME: FROM CHILDREN'S LIT. TO PRIME-TIME
Joyce Ann Litton 26

READING TO CHILDREN: WHY NOT?
Barbara J. Craig and Vicki Roth 33

THE MIGHTY HUNTER OF PAINT CREEK
Rebecca Lukens 37

CLASSICAL VISION AND COMIC EFFECT IN NATALIE BABBITT'S KNEE-KNOCK RISE AND GOODY HALL
Anita Moss 44

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN THE ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM: AN AUTHOR'S VIEW
Arnold A. Griese 48

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE INSTRUCTION: A STATE-WIDE SURVEY
Jane Ann Zaharias 52

"MUTUAL GIVING" IN FICTION: A PERSONAL RESPONSE TO JACOB HAVE I LOVED
Daniel P. Woolsey 65

FOLKLORE IN RECENT CALDECOTT BOOKS
Joan S. Nist 71

OPENING THE DOORS OF COMMUNICATION THROUGH CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
Tammra L. Carter 77

SELECTED POEMS
Putnam School Fifth-Graders 79

VIRGINIA HAMILTON:

OHIO'S GIFT FROM THE HEARTLAND

by
June Langford Berkley
(With Research Assistance by Lori Pritchard)

The importance of the oral tradition in story telling--a recent discovery--has always been clear to the family of Virginia Hamilton, highly acclaimed author of fiction for children and young adults. In fact, Hamilton has long acknowledged that the roots of her significant literary outpouring are firmly imbedded in Ohio soil: her family, "the ubiquitous Perry clan " of Yellow Springs, Ohio, where her grandfather, Levi Perry, fled from slavery, established a tradition of storytelling long before Virginia Hamilton was born.

"My Uncle King told the best tall tales, my Aunt Leanna sang the finest sorrowful songs, and my own mother could take a slice of fiction floating around the family and polish it into a saga," Hamilton says. Many of her own skillfully told stories grow out of childhood memories and her native ability to observe human nature in a way that transcends the everyday. As Hamilton pointed out recently at a children's literature conference at Central State University, the literary achievements of her family were confined to the oral telling of tales, prior to the publication of Zeely (1967), but it is the Perry clan's unfailing sense of myth and language that gives both shape and substance to much of her writing.

Speculations about her own roots grow out of the lost history of her family. "That knowledge remains tantalizingly out of reach," she says, "but I have a number of speculations about my origins, which I am able to spin and weave as long and short tales throughout my fictions."

In discussing one of her most recent novels, A Little Love (1983), Hamilton says, "Time, place and family are at the heart of the fictions I create. The characters, particularly in this book, long for a complete family as did the character, Tree, in Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush. My commitment to family in my books has its foundation in my background and the initimate and shared places of the hometown and the hometown's parade of life."

Hamilton writes, "I was born among the poor in a sweeping, rural Ohio landscape on the 'outer edge' of the Great Depression." She was the youngest of Etta Belle Perry Hamilton and Kenneth James Hamilton's five children. "My parents had no money but they were industrious and acquired a small farm of rich, dark fields. I and my brothers and sisters grew up believing, knowing, that land was

our nourishment. Every food we ate we grew or we raised ourselves. We raised hogs and chickens; we grew corn, melons, acres of cucumbers and tomatoes--what we did not raise or grow, we did not eat."

Reflecting on her origins in Yellow Springs--and on her literary sources in general--Hamilton remarked, "Hometown would seem to be the emotional landscape for my own spiritual growth, even when the hometown picks itself up and moves somewhere else. I've suffered through every hometown situation, or I have imagined how a situation might feel, just as my characters do, as historically other people like myself have suffered through them. The real progress of a people across the hopescape of America has near the soul of it much restless comings and goings. Movement, change, is at the heart of the hometown folks' tireless dance across the continent. The hopescape and its dream and need give to my writing a sense of continuity and narrative source," Hamilton explains.

This is not to say that her books do not go beyond her own experience; rather the depth of her own linguistic gifts propells her beyond the regional and the topical. The writing of her early years, centered around the search for roots and the appreciation for her own heritage, while a reflection of a vital interest and personal pride in her own family history, has been universally recognized for its rare transcendence of ethnic and racial limits.

For example, her Greenwillow book Willie Bea and the Time the Martians Landed (1983), an account of the eventful day the Orson Wells radio play inadvertently terrified people around the country, traces the drama-filled events that unfolded at the Wing and Mills home in central Ohio. While Willie Bea and her large family of cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents--the most intriguing and vivid characters Hamilton ever created, some critics say--react to the Halloween night of fright and scares in their own good style, the portentious night of reckoning strikes a familiar chord with readers of a wide spectrum of ethnic backgrounds.

And what modern American family--or world-wide family, for that matter--can fail to connect with her fascinating exploration of a family's recent past? Uncovering tangled relationships, dark and sometimes frightening guilts and secrets--which lead ultimately to a deeper understanding between mother and daughter-this is the stuff of novels that transcend narrow ethnic labels. Hamilton's evocation of these themes in Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush (1982) prompted critic Betsy Hearne to remark in Twentieth-Century Children's Writers, "(Hamilton)...has heightened the standards for children's literature as few other authors have."

Hamilton herself has remained critically unaware of her sources. In "Black Traditions in M. C. Higgins, the Great" (Language Arts, Vol. 57, No. 4), Kathleen Scholl recounts that the author has pointed out her own awareness of the difference between what comes to her "directly through oral transmission versus what she thought did not pass to her through oral tradition." Scholl reports that Hamilton dismissed mention of second sight in M. C. Higgins as "...just a device. It could come from anywhere. It's nothing specific out of my background." Yet the Yellow Springs writer is keenly aware of the rhythms and patterns of tales told by her family--particularly by her mother. In fact, it is curious to note that Hamilton mirrors her own blending of genetic gifts and careful craftsmanship in her highly believable characters. Booklist said of Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush: "The story is minutely and vividly developed, with no jarring continuity between scenes of present time and past.

Each character takes shape both from current behavior and influential factors of his or her background. This interplay of past on present is one of the most skillful aspects of the book..."

Hamilton's use of Black English in A Little Love (as is the case in Sweet Whispers) gives the reader a rhythmic narrative and a sense of character that prompted Booklist reviewers to praise the novel as "dignifying the term teenage romance" because it offered "four (black) characters so three-dimensional that a reader will sense their presence almost physically...." Over and over the critics have cited the two time winner of the Newberry Medal for her ability to portray "...a humane acceptance of people in their struggle, and to illuminate a hope for the power of their love." (School Library Journal)

Citing the character development of the adolescent M. C. Higgins, Kathleen Scholl points out that Hamilton has been able, in that much-loved novel, to give readers a believable growth toward manhood that moves far beyond the regional and ethnic setting in which the events of young Higgins' life unfold. As M.C. works openly (at the conclusion of the novel) with the pariah, Ben, we see clearly how his father's acceptance of that decision marks the way in which M.C. is passing to maturity. M.C. is a strongly individual character, yet a universal one." Scholl calls Higgins "...a landmark in children's book publishing, not only as an authentic statement of a way of experiencing life that is both particular and universal, but as the finest example of a creative work for children that deals with a black experience so completely."

Currently, Hamilton is exploring new--yet old--themes: "I feel less involved with my own heritage and more preoccupied with survivors of all kinds: Will the few who survive the cataclysm do so because they are genetically different? Is it possible that telepathy, prophecy, and genius are genetic mutants? Could the striking talents of a few be the means of survival for many?" She explores these questions in Justice and her Brothers, Dustland, and The Gathering (1978-81). Yet no matter where Hamilton's multi-faceted interests lead her, she is never far from home. In The Magical Adventures of Pretty Pearl (1983), she tells the intriguing story of a god-child come down from Mount Kenya; the account is filled with rich folklore and mythology embedded in everyday lives. The book is a store of opportunities "...for upper level students to analyze for literary technique and substance, drawing on a kaleidoscope of unending themes and metaphors with which to view history in cultural terms."

Hornbook (September/October 1984) cites the importance of language in A Little Love, praising the author's "...finely tuned understanding of the rhythm and flow of black speech and her keen observation of the humdrum details of daily living." Again, in this novel Hamilton transcends the predictable to give us a memorable teen-ager whose search for roots and understanding "...acquires the dignity of a true quest."

Winner of the National Book Award, the Boston Globe/Horn Book Award, and the Lewis Carroll Shelf Award, Hamilton continues to make appearances world-wide; but she exemplifies her loyalty to home by not infrequent appearances at mid-West literary conferences. In 1984 she won the Ohioans award for her body of literature; earlier, in 1969, she won the Ohioans award for Best Juvenile Fiction by an Ohioan. Kent State University has established an annual Virginia Hamilton Lectureship Conference and Central State University recently honored her at two-day literary convocation.

Hamilton now lives in Yellow Springs with her husband, Arnold Adoff, and their two teenage children. In addition to her work as a fiction writer and lecturer, she has won distinction as th author of biographies, with particular interest in Paul Robeson and W. E. B. Dubois. But for her vast audience of young readers--of all ages--the endless parade of characters who issue forth from the heartland is her greatest gift of telling. To read Virginia Hamilton is to understand why this great writer says "Time, place, the hometown, become almost mythical for me."

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ERIC/RCS REPORT:

THE NEW REALISM IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

by

Margaret Mier

Living happily ever after is not, after all, inevitable. When Louise Fitzhugh suggested just that in her 1964 publication of Harriet the Spy, she rocked the sugary world of the children's story. Since then, a steady and increasing stream of writers has undermined axioms familiar to children's literature--being good brings happiness, all suffering has a purpose, love can solve any problem--until today, as McClenathan argues, "The movement to protect children in their literature from life's tragedies is over, doubtless forever." Contemporary literature for children confronts problems never suggested in the idyllic family life of the Moffats. Divorce, poverty, racism and old age are frequent concerns, not only in adolescent and intermediate fiction, but also in books for the very young. Called the "new realism," this trend has expanded the content of children's literature to include once taboo subjects. Trying Hard to Hear You, for example, is one of several recent books for teenagers exploring the problems of being homosexual in a straight world.

Despite its undoubted impact and its enthusiastic acceptance by children and educators alike, the new realism has not escaped criticism. The frequently bleak picture of life it presents has been attacked for being as one-dimensional as the sentimental view it avoids. In adhering to the grimmest of reality, critics say, it fails to suggest the possiblity for change. Debate over the new realism at once raises larger questions about the purpose of children's literature and the nature of the literary experience and poses specific problems for the elementary and secondary school teacher. Trying to incorporate literature into the curriculum or select books for bibliotherapy, the teacher is faced with the difficult tasks of evaluating the new realism and finding methods to use it most effectively in the classroom. For such a teacher the question may not be how much new realism to insert in the literature program, but how to guide students' response to it. The following ERIC resources may help in these efforts.

Greater Truthfulness

Much of the controversy over the new realism concerns the impact its frequently sad or ambiguous endings have on young

readers. Roggenbuck believes that for young adults, at least, the influence is positive. While recognizing that these resolutions, so different from earlier fiction's inevitably hopeful ones, can leave readers "dangling," Roggenbuck feels that they also reflect more accurately the experiences of young people today. Teenagers who have problems with drugs or crime, or who have witnessed their families break up through divorce, will not accept books offering simple solutions to serious problems. Thus, Roggenbuck sees ambiguous conclusions as potential strengths, engaging teenagers through the truthfulness of their presentation. In A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich, for example, whether the main character will really act on his decision to seek treatment for drug addiction is never revealed. Avoiding the "pat ending," Roggenbuck feels, highlights the great difficulty drug addicts face in rehabilitation, and keeps the story "true to life."

Teenagers, Roggenbuck believes, will find that the works of "new realism" mirror their lives in characterization as well as in plot resolution. Adolescent literature in the past generally described only America's success story, but today it reflects the experience of the large group of teenagers who are not white, middle class and college bound.

> The widening of the range of characters in the novels to include more ethnic and racial minorities has made it possible for more students to find books with heroes and heroines that will mirror themselves and their works.

Along with Roggenbuck, Snyder suggests that the liberalization of content and treatment of issues, and the inclusion of a broader range of social and ethnic groups in its characterization, has produced a fiction that comes nearer reality as young readers know it. More than offering the opportunity to "see themselves," Snyder believes that the new realism answers children's great need to understand: "Contemporary books dealing with serious subjects allow children to look at the basic ills of our time. Most kids already know all about them." After all, Snyder says, "Young people are not as fightened of reality as some adults think. They are more frightened by whispered half-truths."

Hopelessness vs Hope

While not denying its empathic quality, Carr finds that the "tell-it-like-it-is" school is itself a product of half-truths:

"Victory must always share the battlefield with defeat. Hope must conquer, or be conquered by, hopelessness." In focusing exclusively on defeat and hopelessness, Carr believes that the new realism ignores this duality of experience, offering instead "single-edged themes that create depressing reading for our children." One of several examples of unflinching hopelessness she presents, The Mimosa Tree (Cleaver, 1970), is the story of a poor North Carolina family who move to Chicago in hopes of a better life. Rushing from one violent scene to another--a mattress bloody from a murder, a boy pushing his mother under a bus, a child dying from an epileptic fit--the book is fascinating reading; yet as the Proffitt family, having failed at life in the Chicago slum, retreats to North Carlina with another "false vision of immediately better times," Carr finds that "the reader is filled with utter helplessness." Unlike Roggenbuck, Carr argues that it is not enough for literature to present a realistic "slice of life." It must provide "an opportunity for the reader to become involved with the issues presented and to view their problems and possible solutions from many different angles." Too many recent books, Carr feels, encourage in students a passivity, a fatalistic acceptance of life as it is.

Violence in Picture Books

According to Karen Harris, the portrayal of unchecked aggression or cruelty is a special problem in picture books, less because it ignores the potential for positive action than because it shows young children a picture of "the world out of control." Contradictions between the text and its illustrations complicate the problem. For example, the plot of Fitzhugh and Scoppettone's Bang, Bang, You're Dead, describing how two groups of children learn to play together amicably, shows its young readers the value of peaceful settlements to problems. The thirty pictures of gory, battling children, however, filling almost one-third of the book, communicate quite a different message. Fighting, it seems, is exciting, fun, important, though perhaps it isn't nice to say so. In Keeping's Through the Window, Harris states, "What is significant...is not so much the violence, [as] the main character's response to it." Having watched from his window as a little dog was trampled to death by horses, Joseph sees the owner sadly scoop the pet up in her arms. Breathing on the glass, he draws stick figures of the woman and her dog. Both, according to Harris, are "grinning from ear to ear." Is Joseph's drawing a denial of a sad event, a means of overcoming his sorrow, or a sign of his happiness at the dog's death? How are young readers to interpret this disturbing act? Though textual ambiguity may stimulate a more complex understanding in older readers, Harris believes that the unexplained emphasis on violence in many recent picture books only confuses very young children.

Metaphors for Death

Also frequently confusing, Delisle and McNamee suggest, is the treatment of death in new picture books. The authors cite research indicating that children move through three general stages in their developing understanding of death: between three and five, dominated by what Piaget calls magical thinking, children see death as sad but temporary, an experience always affecting others; from six to eight they become concrete thinkers, fascinated by the details of dying but not yet generalizing the effects to everyone; around nine and ten, as they approach abstract thinking, children realize that death is both permanent and inevitable, even for themselves. If this time frame is correct, Delisle and McNamee say, books dealing with death through metaphor are frequently aimed at children incapable of abstract thinking. In Mile's Annie and the Old One, for example, Annie comes to accept her grandmother's approaching death after she sees that the old one's life is like the rug she weaves--it has a beginning and an end, and makes room, on its completion, for others to follow it. Though perhaps inspiring to adults, these authors doubt that the metaphor can be understood by seven- and nine-year olds, its intended audience. Children in the preabstract thinking stage are more likely to appreciate the practical orientation of Margaret Wise Brown's The Dead Bird. Finding a dead bird in the grass, a group of young children stop their play to examine it, curious to see what death is like. Feeling very sad, they decide to give the bird a funeral.

Afterward, they all visit the grave for awhile, "until they forget," and return to their play. The Dead Bird presents the process of grief and reconciliation in matter-of-fact, yet sympathetic terms, terms its young audiences can readily understand.

Literature's Effect

The controversy over the new realism reveals two major approaches to literature. Those valuing the new trend for its increased truthfulness find literature's main force in its ability to capture life. By mirroring the experiences of its readers, they suggest, literature inspires interest, sympathy, and understanding. The new realism's critics, on the other hand, state that in its grimness the movement discourages readers from acting for change. They see literature as more obviously ethical in nature. To view literature as either a mirror or a catalyst, however, is to oversimplify it.

Literary critic George Lukacs also believes that literature exerts a largely ethical influence on its readers. But, as Lukac's reviewer, Peterson, suggests, this "does not mean that literature seeks to interfere with [people's] practical li[ves] by giving sermons, moral codes, or object lessons.... It does not itself solve any of the reader[s'] problems, complex or simple, personal or social." Instead, the moving experiences in realistic fiction exert "a broadly humanizing influence," expanding readers' views of self and world:

> The literary effect changes the whole being of everyday life into one with a sense of human wholeness by forcing onto readers a new world...with new or freshly seen contents, and by making readers capable of taking in this world with rejuvenated senses and thinking.

Although the effect is only temporary, good books, Lukacs state, produce "moral readiness," a heightened attention, a more imaginative response to life.

Like Lukacs, Sloan believes that the imanginative power of literature lies in its ability to at once face reality and move beyond it:

> Literature is the journal of man's quest for his human identity. It has everything to do with people, young and old--their actions, their needs and desires. Great stories and poems do not shrink from showing us both sides of the coin: What it is to be human and what it means to be inhumane. Inside a story we can walk for a time wearing someone else's shoes, seeing as he saw or feeling as she felt. We can travel to faraway places; we can live for a time in the past or the future. In imaginative literature are created new worlds--of possibilities and choices--that put us in touch with our own imaginative worlds.

But how, Sloan asks, can teachers encourage and educate the imagination? While attentive to the therapeutic value and the insights, social or moral, offered by good fiction, teachers must present literature to children as an art. Among other suggestions for increasing student appreciation, Sloan lists questions designed to help students discover what literature is and how it works. Predictive questions, such as,"If the story

took place somewhere else or in a different time, how would it be changed?" or "Suppose the order of events were changed. What would happen to the story? Would it be a new story or not story at all?" shift readers attention from specific content to underlying patterns and relationships. Analytic questions, such as "What does the author do to create suspense, to make you want to read on to find out what happens?" move students from their personal response to an understanding of how literature inspires that response.

In giving students the tools to evaluate realistic fiction, teachers not only encourage a fuller appreciation of literature, but also help prevent what critics feel is the major danger of the new realism--the uncritical acceptance of a distorted picture of reality. In addition to the materials cited, the ERIC system contains a number of documents that deal with the new realism and ways of presenting it in the classroom. These may be found by consulting monthly issues of Resources in Education (RIE) and the Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE) under the headings "Children's Literature," and "Literature Appreciation."

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FOOTNOTES

[1]Dayanne McClenathan, "Tragic Themes in Children's Books" p. 21

[2]Diane L. Chapman, "The New Look at Children's Picture Books" p.8

[3]Mary Jane Roggenbuck, "Young Adult Books are Changing to Refelct Realities" p.7

[4]Mary Jane Roggenbuck, "Young Adult Books are Changing to Reflect Realities" p. 7

[5]Mary Jane Roggenbuck, "Young Adult Books are Changing to Reflect Realities" p. 9

[6]Anne Snyder, "Realistic Fiction for Youth" p. 7

[7]Robin L. Carr, "From Pandora's Box: Hopelessness and Defeat in Children's Literature" p. 3

[8]Robin L. Carr, "From Pandora's Box: Hopelessness and Defeat in Children's Literature" p. 1

[9]Karen Harris, "Themes of Violence in Picture Books" p.3

[10]Karen Harris, "Themes of Violence in Picture Books" p.5

[11]Robert G. Delisle and Abigail S. Woods McNamee, "Children's Perceptions of Death: A Look at the Appropriateness of Selected Picture Books"

[12]Gordon Peterson, "George Lukacs: His Ideas about Literature and Their Implications for Teaching Children's Literature" p. 5

[13]Glenna Davis Sloan, "Can Literature be Taught?" p. 2

[14]Glenna Davis Sload, "Can Literature be Taught?" p. 6

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GENDER BIAS IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

by Dr. Barbara J. Craig

Talking about gender bias in children's literature is a bit like talking about the causes of cancer; the audience begins to feel they have no "good" choices available. You do have healthy alternatives. Bias-free books do exist. (See note at end of article.) But gender bias also exists, and it constitutes a serious problem.

We know children shape their adult expectations and behaviors in part from what they read. The Association of Women Psychologists clearly states that training girls to be one way and boys another unfavorably affects the children's adult lives:

> Psychological oppression in the form of sex role clearly conveys to girls from the earliest ages that their nature is to be submissive, servile, and repressed. . . .In addition, both men and and women have come to realize the effects on men of . . .sex role stereotyping, the crippling pressure to compete, to achieve, to produce, to stifle emotion, sensitivity, and gentleness, all taking their toll in psychic and physical traumas. (Women on Words and Images)

In children's books, this sex role socialization, or gender bias, takes three forms--the relative absence of females, limited roles for females, and the use of female dialect.

Before I discuss each of these three in detail, however, let me say that I personally would never rule out a book as a present for my three-year-old niece or for the eleven-year-old son of a friend simply because it fell short of perfrection in one or more of the above categories. But I do keenly feel the importance of balancing the gender-biased books in their libraries with ones that go beyond stereotypes. So I examine a book carefully before buying it and I encourage you to do the same, whether for your students or for your own children and grandchildren.

First, count the number of female characters in the book. Two of the most popular children's authors, Dr. Seuss and Maurice Sendak, use almost exclusively male characters. The only female character in Winnie the Pooh is Kanga, important only as the mother of Roo. Children's literature in general includes two boys for every girl (Worley) and seven males for every female character (Graham).

actually declined. A 1979 Caldecott winner, The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses, features a female as its main character, yet we seldom see her and even less frequently hear her speak. How can girls model themselves after nonexistent characters?

Second, look at what the females in the book do. A survey of children's literature between 1965 and 1980 found that male characters were "significantly more active" than female characters, and more adventurous (Stahlecker). All too often female characters observe passively or act only to serve others in the story. For instance, in Nature's Hidden World, a popular pop-up book, the only female character is a mother sparrow whose only activity consists of feeding her young.

When the main character is an active girl, she is often a tomboy, a condition the adults in The Girl Who Was a Cowboy lament and work to correct. The message to children is clear: girls shouldn't roughhouse and take the initiative. One outstanding exception must be noted here--Pippi Longstocking. Her author obviously admires Pippi for her unconventional behavior.

This dearth of active female characters in children's literature makes books such as Tatterhood and Other Tales stand out as exemplary. In Tatterhood's folk tales, women do rather than are done to.

The third way of judging the extent of a story's gender bias is by the language its characters use. Women speak differently from men. Even elementary school children recognize the existance of a seperate female dialect (Edelsky.) Although some female dialect features work to a woman's advantage, many of them carry a connotation of lower status or of weakness.

Someone who asks a great many questions not only conveys the impression that she is unsure of herself but also that she is unsure of her questions being important enough to all receive answers. For instance, in Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret, Margaret asks a disproportionate number of questions,most of them rhetorical or reassurance-seeking. In Paddington Helps Out, Mrs. Brown asks twenty questions to Mr. Brown's eight.

Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret demonstrates another characteristic of female dialect--use of intensifiers ("very," "really," etc.) and exclamations to underscore speech the women themselves view as relatively unimportant. Margaret and her friend Nancy pepper their speech with exclamation marks and unnecessary adverbs, thereby revealing their insecurity. Of course Blume intended Margaret and Nancy to appear insecure; that's one major premise of the novel. And as I mentioned before, an instance of gender bias here and there causes no

problem. But it doesn't occur merely here and there. Nor does it occur only among passive female characters. Laura and Ma in Little House on the Prairie employ female dialect to point out their insignificance in a male world:

> "Oh, Ma," Laura begged, "Jack has gone to heaven, hasn't he? He was such a good dog, can't he go to heaven?"
>
> Ma did not know what to answer, but Pa said: "Yes, Laura, he can."

Laura can only ask questions with intensifiers ("such"); Ma can't even answer, but must defer to male authority.

An examination of female dialect in Charlotte's Web reveals an illuminating progression. As Fern becomes more and more interested in a boy in the neighborhood, she employs more and more lower-status female dialect features. At the end of the book she describes the county fair--"I had the best time I have ever had anywhere or any time in all of my whole life!"--and we can hear her string of words italicized for the emphasis she thinks they won't carry by themselves. Surely this teaches girls a debilitating and unnecessary lesson, that

> Women speak in italics, and the more ladylike and feminine you are, the more in italics you are supposed to speak. This is another way of expressing uncertainty with your own self-expression. . .italics. . .actually. . .say something like: Here are directions telling you how to react, since my saying something by itself is not likely to convince you. . . (Lakoff, p. 56)

The use of female dialect by animals provides yet gender-bias phenomenon in children's literature. Animals that are the object of humor or derision speak in female dialect because this marks them as lower-status characters whom it is acceptable to laugh at. In The Berenstain Bears and the Wild, Wild Honey (a popular children's book in my area), Papa is the one to use italics and unnecessary modifiers because he is the one readers laugh at. The hypochondriac Crocodile in Lobel's Fables (a 1981 Caldecott award winner) uses exclamations and unnecessary modifiers such as "ever so much better," and he, too, is a comic character. These books and others like them teach children that the language females are supposed to speak evokes little or no respect.

But don't despair. Many books free of the "cancer" of gender bias exist. For instance, Blume's story Freckle Juice

is non-stereotypic: two boys overly concerned with their looks fall prey to a girl who turns their vanity to her own profit.

So keep your eyes open. Examine potential purchases carefully, and try to balance the lessons the children around you learn about males and females--for their sakes.

(Note: I have compiled a limited annotated list of children's books free of gender bias. Please contact me if you are interested.)

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TEACHING WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE TO ADULTS

by
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Sendak's tightly constructed tale, Where the Wild Things Are,[1] with its imaginative pictures, can demonstrate to college students, who are potential teachers and/or parents, just how effectively the story and the pictures are integrated.[2] Sendak's biographer Selma G. Lanes has called the book one of "the most suspenseful and satisfying nursery tales of our time."[3] The text of 338 words builds carefully on repetition of certain words such as "terrible," and phrases like "wild thing"/"wild things." The story also moves easily from one point to another by the repetition of "and." The simple use of this connective is found 35 times in the story, or slightly more than 10 percent of the total text. Because event is piled on event by the use of "and," the relative importance of the various occurrences is blurred in Max's and the reader's mind, as it would be in a dream. It is only when we look at the totality of text with pictures that we can see the logic behind the irrationality.

Where the Wild Things Are begins "the night when Max wore his wolf suit," and he dashes around the house making "mischief of one kind and another." On the second page, for example, when he is chasing the dog, the picture on the wall "by Max" is similar to the one of the wild things he will meet later. That he has an uplifted fork in his left hand will be significant at the end of the story when his supper is waiting for him. From this everyday world where parents get angry about excessive noise, Max is sent to bed without his supper for being a wild thing.

Selma G. Lanes describes the scene this way: "banished to his bedroom with nothing to eat, an angry Max, eyes closed, virtually wills his room to change into a forest. (Even the bedposts are magically transformed into trees.)"[4] "That very night" after the forest grows in Max's room, "an ocean tumbled by with a private boat for Max," and he sails off "to the place where the wild things are." His everyday world is exchanged for a nighttime dream. But while the monsters may be scary, Max tames them with his magic trick of "staring into all their yellow eyes without blinking once." Max is, thus, in control of the monsters. Lanes notices the parallel between the misshapen tent Max is making in the opening picture of the book and the elegant tent he is given as king of the wild things.[5] When Max sends the wild things off to bed without any supper (just as he himself had been), they obediently do as they are directed. And while Max is in control of the wild things (they have even made him king), they don't love him "best of all." So he must return to a real world where the person who loves him best of all, his mother, has prepared supper for him. And when he re-enters this world, he finds the meal "still hot." We have started in the conscious world of Max playing human monster in his wolf suit, gone into the fantasy world of the human-created dream monsters, and returned to a world of human values where people exhibit care for one another by the provision of food, something Max couldn't find in the world "where the wild things are."

within one person, Max. Although we hear his mother, we never see her. He departs the everyday world, enters another world, and returns to his own world--a pattern we frequently notice in children's literature. Sendak's story gives each part about equal space: the first third in the outward journey (100 words), the middle portion in the world of the wild things (120 words), but the smells of "good things to eat" help him return to his own world (118 words). Yet the world he re-enters is altered. The edict that Max go to bed without supper is now modified by "some one (who) loved him best." Thus, Max doesn't end the story as he had started: he can't stay with the wild things, even though they love him and are willing to prove it by eating him up (exactly what Max said to his mother when she called him "WILD THING"). The wild things cannot fulfill their promises with a love that includes something tangible (love represented by the time and effort to prepare food for a loved one). Consequently, Max has learned that "I'LL EAT YOU UP" isn't as loving as he thought. Also his mother has changed her attitude from calling Max a wild thing to forgiving him, and she demonstrates this by providing him with a hot supper.

A word about the pictures: as the story begins, the pictures of Max's mischief-making world are surrounded by a border of white space. When the forest starts to grow, the white space is crowded out, and a picture fills the right-hand page. On the voyage out, the pictures take up part of the left page and the full right page. Upon Max's arrival in the land of the wild things, the pictures cover both pages, with white spaces only at the bottom of the page for the text. When Max declares that it is time for the wild rumpus to start, Sendak supplies three double-page pictures without any text or white space at all. But after Max has sent the wild things off to bed without their supper and the pictures are full, upper double-pages, Max looks bored. (At this point he may glimpse how his mother feels, and perhaps he begins to experience the concept of forgiveness.) Knowing he must leave the land of the wild things to return to where someone loves him best, he sails back; the pictures have shifted again to full right and partial left-hand pages (the boat is now going from right to left, a reverse of the outbound direction). When Max is back in his own room, the picture is a full right-hand page, not just a picture bordered by white with which he began the story. (By this, I believe that Sendak suggests a change in Max.)[6] Finally, the independent clause is on its own separate page with no picture at all, in marked contrast with the three pages of full pictures without text when the wild rumpus is taking place. Make-believe is left off as Max is able to turn to the hot supper, reminding us of the warm love and affection that his mother has for Max.[7]

The text and the pictures work together effectively to produce a unified story. As Max's room grows, the white border recedes and pictures fill the page, while the text reads "grew and grew--and grew." The rhythm of the prose of the outward journey to where the wild things are moves "through night and day and in and out of weeks and almost over a year." The return journey (reversed in the pictures) is reversed in the prose, when Max "sailed back over a year and in and out of weeks and through a day and into the night of his very own room." At certain points, the story appears poetic because of the word repetition, but only at Max's departure from the land of the wild things does the prose lapse into ending rhymes:

> But the wild things cries, "Oh please don't go--
> we'll eat you up--we love you so!"
> And Max said, "No!"

The matter-of-fact refusal by Max stops any attempt at coersion, for Max knows he wants to go back to where someone loves him best of all. He even has a smile on his face as he leaves and a look of relief when he returns. His complete reintegration into home and family is met by the supper that is still hot.[8]

NOTES

[1] New York: Harper & Row, 1963.

[2] The evolution of Where the Wild Things Are is traced in some detail by Selma G. Lanes in The Art of Maurice Sendak (New York: Abradale Press/Harry N. Abrams, 1980), pp. 85-107.

[3] Lanes, p. 87.

[4] Lanes, p. 87.

[5] Lanes, p. 92.

[6] Lanes, (p. 93) makes another point about this final picture: "When Max willingly gives up his crown to sail back home..., the illustration shows a smiling Max, his wolf hood slipping off his head (a subtle reminder that he has been purged of his wildness and rage). On the table we see Max's supper, with a large piece of cake for dessert (suggesting that his mother has entirely forgiven him)."

[7] Sendak himself (quoted by Lanes, p. 96) commented about the pictures: "One of the reasons why the picture book is so fascinating is that there are lots of devices to make the form itself more interesting. In Where the Wild Things Are, the device is a matching of sizes and shapes. I used it to describe Max's moods pictorially: his anger, more or less normal in the beginning, expands into rage; then the explosion of fantasy serves as a release from that particular anger; and finally there is the gradual collapse of the fantasy and it's all over. The smell of food brings Max to reality; . . ."

[8] In Sendak's acceptance speech for the Caldecott Medal in 1964 (quoted by Lanes, p. 107), he said,

> "Max, the hero of my book, discharges his anger against his mother, and returns to the real world sleepy, hungry, and at peace with himself.
>
> Certainly we want to protect our children from new and painful experiences that are beyond their emotional comprehension and that intensify anxiety; and to a point we can prevent premature exposure to such experiences. That is obvious. But what is just as obvious--and what is too often overlooked--is the fact that from their earliest years children live on familiar terms with disrupting emotions, that fear and anxiety are an intrinsic part of their everyday lives, that they continually cope with frustrations as best they can. It is the best means they have for taming Wild Things.
>
> It is my involvement with this inescapable fact of childhood--the awful vulnerability of children and their struggle to make themselves King of all Wild Things--that gives my work whatever truth and passion it may have."

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"WHICH IS TO BE MASTER?"

by
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Although ALICE IN WONDERLAND was published in 1865, scholars and critics have only in the past half-century come to realize the depth of the book. On one level, of course, ALICE is a pleasing children's story. But on another level, it is an ominous journey into chaos and disorder. And on a third level, it is a vehicle for Lewis Carroll to explore his vocation and avocations.

Many of the strange happenings in ALICE IN WONDERLAND come from these explorations. The nonsense mathematics in the Pool of Tears is really calculation in another number base. The many mirror images in THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS (stepping back to approach, running to stay in place) are manifestations of Carroll's studies in logic. The dynamic portrayals of the Lion and the Unicorn are suddenly caricatures of Gladstone and Disraeli. Carroll was a professional mathematician, a clever logician, and a student of ethics and politics; ALICE IN WONDERLAND provided a forum for all these interests. However, Carroll's most pervasive interest was in the power of language; here he explored such areas as linguistic signs, ambiguity, and classification, but predominantly he explored the relationship of names and things. A gentle, humorous, yet profound treatment of this relationship is rarely absent from ALICE IN WONDERLAND for many pages at a time.

CARROLL'S THEORY OF NAMES

Lewis Carroll, along with other Victorian linguists like John Stuart Mill, was aware of the centuries-old controversy between Nominalism and Realism. Nominalists felt that words do not refer to objective existences but are merely verbal utterances. The Realists felt that words have denotative AND connotative meaning (Gardner, 1960, p. 268). Carroll most likely agreed with the Nominalists, but often had his characters argue both sides, so he could examine all positions.

Carroll's model of names and things appears late in THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS, in an exchange between Alice and Carroll's alter ego, the White Knight:

> "...The name of the song is called 'Haddocks' eyes.'"
> "Oh, that's the name of the song, is it?"
> Alice said, trying to feel interested.
> "No, you don't understand," the Knight
> said, looking a little vexed. "That's what
> the name is called. The name really is
> 'The Aged Aged Man.'"
> "Then I ought to have said 'That's what
> the song is called'?" Alice corrected herself.
> "No, you oughtn't: that's quite another

thing! The song is called 'Ways and Means':
but that's only what it's called, you know!"
"Well, what is the song, then?" Alice
said, who was by this time completely
bewildered.
"I was coming to that," the Knight said.
"The song really is 'A-sitting On A Gate'" (AIW, 212)

Here Carroll clearly distinguishes between names and things, and adds a third category of labels or call-names. These labels are verbal symbols that refer to other verbal symbols (names). The White Knight has created a metalanguage--a language to discuss language (Sutherland, 1970, p. 120)

In Wonderland, Carroll has developed an inverted microcosm of the world. Where meaning in language leads to order in this world, the lack of communal meaning leads to chaos in Wonderland. In exploring this microcosm, Carroll examines the various roles common nouns play and the boundaries they create in language.

I. STRETCHED NOUNS

One phase of Carroll's examination looks at stretching common nouns to take in more than one meaning per usage. The first stretching method involves portmanteau words, where "there are two meanings packed up into one word" ("'slithy' means 'lithe' and 'slimy.'") (AIW, 187). Carroll's adaptation of the portmanteau word comes from the theory of blending articulated by linguists Eric Partridge and Charles Hockett among others. Interestingly, whereas many of the portmanteau words in ALICE are nonsense ("vorpal" and "tulgey"), others have come into the language ("galumph" and "chortle"). Elizabeth Sewell has argued that since Carroll determines the meaning of his portmanteau words after their creation, they are not true blends, but merely groups of letters that look like other words (Sutherland, 1970, p. 151).

A second stretching method is the use of the pun or homophone, a device of much linguistic interest in Victorian England. Some of Carroll's educational puns ("Reeling and Writhing" for "Reading and Writing") are largely aural in appeal, but his puns in THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS lead to contextual ambiguity. As they use the words "flour-flower" and "ground-ground" (noun-verb), Alice, discussing a baking recipe, and the Red Queen, discussing a garden, demonstrate the amusing quality of puns, alongside their ambiguous, stretched nature.

Portmanteau words acquire multiple meanings through their structure, while puns acquire multiple meanings through sound. But since both offer alternative meanings, and these meanings are determined by a reader/listener's perceptions, common-noun stretching seems to favor the Nominalist view.

II. RELATIVISTIC OR MEANINGLESS NOUNS

In this next segment, Carroll moves from stretched nouns, which at least have definable boudaries, into several areas where meanings of common nouns expand at a precipitous rate. In the first case, Alice is trying to describe the Looking-Glass world to the Red Queen:

"When you say 'hill,'" the Queen
interrupted, "I could show you hills,

> in comparison with which you'd call that a valley."
>
> "No, I shouldn't," said Alice, surprised into contradicting her at last: "a hill can't be a valley, you know. That would be nonsense—-" (AIW,142)

The exchange recalls Plato's discussion with Theaetetus about the height of men. The Red Queen's view is not erroneous — this hill, relative to others, is small in her perception. But her expansion of the word "hill" to include "valley" confuses Alice and dissolves communal meaning.

A second case occurs when Tweedledee asks Alice to tie his helmet: "He called it a helmet, but it certainly looked much more like a saucepan." (AIW,168) Here Tweedledee is foiled in his attempt to redefine a common noun by its function. Alice is not confused. Her perception of the thing and Tweedledee's are different, but communication is upheld: she does tie the helmet, while maintaining the reality of her perception.

The third case arises in Alice's conversation with the Looking-Glass Insects. Alice notes that names are of "No use...but it's useful to the people that name them, I suppose." (AIW, 152) In other words, people assign names for their use; hence names are only arbitrary and descriptive: Dragon-fly, Horse-fly, Butterfly. But in the Looking-Glass world, the insects respond to their names and become personified. Their names take on meaning: Snap-dragon-fly, Rocking-horse-fly, Bread-and-butter-fly. Carroll, using a mundane insect, presents both sides of the Nominalist-Realist controversy.

In a final case, Humpty Dumpty attempts to erase all meaning attached to common nouns:

> "When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."
>
> "The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things."
>
> "The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master—that's all." (AIW, 186)

In the sentence that sets off the exchange, Humpty proclaims, "There's glory for you!" He wants to convey to Alice that their discussion is finished, as he claims "glory" means "a nice knock-down argument." His intent is to clinch the argument (although he fails to do so, because his meaning of "glory" does not fit Alice's). Alice, as listener, expects one message from "glory" but gets another. And Alice does not (cannot) consider Humpty's intention, because all previous users of "glory" had different intentions. In essence, Alice developed a model for the meaning of "glory" over a number of years. When Humpty Dumpty forces a new meaning on her, the results are distress, a temporary loss of meaning, and certainly failure of communication.

Humpty Dumpty is an extreme Nominalist but is hardly irrational. As Ogden and Richards note in THE MEANING OF MEANING, "In spite of a tacit assumption that the term is understood, no principle governs its usage, nor does any technique exist whereby confusion may be avoided." Despite the linguistic chaos he creates, Humpty Dumpty at least knows what he is doing. Carroll implies that other writers and

speakers may not (Spacks, 1966).

In these four cases of nominal relativism, Carroll at times leans toward the rationalist view--should the nature of the hill, the saucepan, or the dragon-fly be preserved in its name? But first through Alice and most emphatically through Humpty Dumpty, Carroll again favors Nominalism--names come from perception.

III. EMPTY OR FALSE NOUNS

In this segment, certain common nouns have become so emptied of perceptual meaning that they move to the left of the White Knight's model and become labels. As she falls down the rabbit hole, Alice takes a jar labelled "ORANGE MARMALADE" and is disappointed to find it empty. What Carroll accurately calls a label is actually a false label, because the thing involved is a jar, not marmalade, and an empty label because it refers to a null set. Shortly thereafter, Alice wonders "what Latitude or Longitude I've got to?" These terms, despite the capitalizations, are not names, but empty labels, for several reasons. First, they are arbitrary, man-made designations. Second, they have no meaning inside the earth. Third, Alice has no idea of their meanings anyway. When Alice reaches the bottom, she finds a bottle labelled "DRINK ME." After a moment's thought, Alice decides that since the label is not "poison," the contents are not poisonous (Sutherland, 1970, p. 122) (Fortunately for Alice and the readers, they are not.) In each of these cases, Alice fails to make the distinction between "name" (the communal meaning of a thing) and "label" (an arbitrary, often erroneous assignation). Carroll's point is that while names are communally arbitrary, labels are individually so.

IV. NOUNS CREATING EVENTS

In this final segment, the expansion of common nouns becomes powerful enough to create events of life or a new reality. In one case, abstractions, through altered meanings, personify themselves. At the Mad Tea Party, Alice confesses to beating Time, and the Mad Hatter is accused of murdering Time. Later, in Looking-Glass land, the White King asks Alice whom she sees on the road:

> "I see nobody on the road," said Alice
> "I only wish I had such eyes," the King remarked in a fretful tone. "To be able to see Nobody! And at that distance too! Why, it's as much as I can do to see real people, by this light!" (AIW, 194)

and subsequently asks the Messenger whom he passed:

> "Nobody," said the Messenger.
> "Quite right," said the King: "this young lady saw him too. So of course Nobody walks slower than you."
> "I do my best," the Messenger said in a sullen tone. "I'm sure nobody walks much faster than I do!"
> "He can't do that," said the King, "or else he'd have been here first..." (AIW, 196)

The King has turned a common pronoun into a proper name (although he realizes its meaning since he does refer to "real people"). This personification makes his meaning different from Alice's and the Messenger's, and destroys the communal meaning. The nominalistic actions of the White King create a new character--Nobody--but diminish communication.

In a second case, metaphors become reality. In "Wool and Water," the sheep asks Alice to "feather" her oars to avoid "catching a crab." Here Alice is the literal one, complaining she is "not a bird!" and looking for the "dear little crab." (AIW, 177) Carroll demonstrates the ambiguity of metaphor and idiom in the language, with their interpretation being largely in the perception. And in the personification and metaphor, the ambiguity creates not only misunderstanding but action--passing an invisible person or looking for an imaginary crab.

CONCLUSIONS

> "Take care of the sense, and the sounds
> will take care of themselves." (AIW, 85)

Ordinarily the Duchess' statement is good linguistic advice, but in Wonderland it simply does not work. The problem is that too often the "sense" of a common noun (the speaker's conveyance of information, in Richard's terms) does not fit with the referential meaning (the consensual meaning a listener perceives in a noun without structural cues). The Jabberwocky poem and Humpty Dumpty's elastic lexicon are good examples of this divergence. "Toves" has no meaning to Alice, and "glory" only a previous and presently useless meaning. In the former case, she experiences non-understanding (no passage of meaning) and in the latter, misunderstanding (the passage of erroneous information). (Sutherland, 1970, p. 211)

For most of her journeys, Alice continually fails to make accurate perceptions about the worlds she is in. She fails because she judges these new worlds by the standards of her old one--logically, mathematically, and especially linguistically. When Alice speaks literally, the inhabitants of Wonderland and Looking-Glass World hear metaphorically; when she speaks idiomatically, they interpret literally. A fit rarely exists between speaker and listener.

But finally, as in most theories of accomodation, Alice adapts to this lack of fit. She learns more about meaning and communication from her failures underground and behind the mirror than she does from her successes in the normal world. Her greatest gain comes from her greatest loss: the loss of her identity in the Wood with No Names. Here she loses her name but keeps her qualities of friendliness and gentleness. She discovers that the tree she rests on has "got no name." And the Fawn runs not from "Alice," but from the "human child." Alice has found the secret to Wonderland: that things in the world have no inherent qualities, and that she cannot talk to or about things that have not been consensually named.

Although she has many adventures to go, this understanding allows Alice eventually to make her peace with Wonderland, to see it as "a wonderful dream" and "wonderful Adventures" and "a real treat." Alice ends each journey by exchanging one reality for another: the royal court of cards becomes dry leaves, the Red Queen becomes a kitten. Perhaps Alice understands that, unlike Donald Rackin claims, Wonderland and the Looking-Glass World are not "completely anarchy" and "meaningless night." (Rackin, 1966) They have an order of their own, an order which she, and we, cannot immediately understand.

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MOM, THE WOLF MAN AND ME:

From Children's Lit to Prime-Time

by
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When Norma Klein's delightful novel for pre-teen girls, Mom, the Wolf Man and Me (1972) was turned into a made-for-TV, prime-time movie in 1980, the screenwriter and producer had to make changes in the story so that it would appeal to adult viewers as well as to children. The novel's primary focus is on Brett Levin's fears that her strong, loving relationship with her unconventional, never-married mother would change if her mother wed Theo, a man she had met. However, large segments of the book deal with Brett's interaction with her young friends.[1] Understandably, this child-centered material would not hold the interest of adults. Thus, the movie script had to devote more attention to the development of the adult characters.

In refocusing the movie, the screenwriter and producers sanitized the liberal social and political values espoused by the main adult characters in the book, replaced a strong female character with a weak one, denigrated an interesting male character, and transformed an unconventional romance into a traditional one. In addition, those responsible for the film created an ending which is so convoluted that children who read the book before viewing the film would undoubtedly be confused and probably disappointed.

While Mom, the Wolf Man and Me is a children's book likely to be read by any girl with either a library card or her own spending money, one cannot account for the differences between the book and film versions in terms of which form a child would find more entertaining. Both versions are enjoyable from a technical standpoint. One can only understand the fundamental disparities between the two versions by considering the perceived attitudinal differences between the smaller numbers of parents who would buy the book for their children and the larger audience of adults who would watch the film. The publishers of the book and the producers of the movie apparently disagreed about the acceptability to their respective audiences of a strong female character role model and of liberal social and political views. The creators of the film also seemed to question the entertainment appeal of nonconventional romance.

character role model and of liberal social and political views. The creators of the film also seemed to question the entertainment appeal of nonconventional romance.

One of the major changes from the novel to the movie version of Mom, the Wolf Man and Me centers around the characterization of Deborah Levin, the mother. In the book, Klein has created a woman who is emotionally and intellectually independent, unconventional, loving and responsible. By contrast, in the film Deborah is quite dependent and somewhat irresponsible. In both versions of the story, Deborah is a professional photographer who cares for the child she conceived out of wedlock. In the novel, Deborah achieves professional success as a result of her own hard work. In the film, she succeeds by relying heavily on her daughter to perform professional chores and by depending on emotional and intellectual support, first, from her father and then from Theo, whom her daughter dubs the Wolf Man because he owns an Irish wolfhound.[2]

In the novel, Brett tells about both the glamour and the demanding nature of her mother's work. The reader knows that Deborah is successful because she receives prizes for her work. Brett enjoys the adventure of accompanying her mother on jobs, likes watching her in the darkroom, and can hardly wait for her mother to buy her a camera of her own. Throughout, Brett is a child who admires her mother's work. Renamed Jen for the movie, she became a precocious assistant who books appointments for her mother, sets up lights and other equipment for her, and wakes her, with great difficulty, in the mornings. One has the impression that the movie Deborah could not function without her daughter who helps provide a sense of organization to her essentially chaotic life.[3]

In the novel, Deborah does not like to cook, but there is no implication that she is negligent toward Brett. Her only specialty is "tarter steak" [sic] which she began to prepare when Brett was a baby because the little girl preferred raw hamburger to cooked meat. After staying up all night to work in her darkroom, before going to bed, Deborah prepares breakfast for her daughter. When she wants to sleep late on the weekends, she has cereal and milk available. She makes brownies for an afterschool treat. As a working parent, she takes her daughter out to eat and orders prepared food. In the mmovie the producers give the impression that because Deborah does not like to cook, she does not adequately care for Jen. The crucial scene occurs when Theo opens the door to Deborah's refrigerator, and the camera focuses for a long shot on the bare shelves.[4]

The movie contains a subplot about Deborah's work which is not in the novel. In the film, she attempts to prepare a collection of her photographs for presentation in a book. Such a sub-theme may enhance greater adult interest, but the treatment of the topic is not consistent with Klein's characterization of Deborah. Deborah begins work on the book aided by the strong emotional and intellectual support of her father. When he can no

longer help her because he is ill, Theo replaces him in the supportive role. Yet, Deborah's relationship with her father receives little treatment in the novel, and there is certainly nothing to indicate that she depends heavily upon him. All that one knows is that she gets along with him better than she does with her mother because he, unlike her mother, accepts the fact that Deborah is dedicated to her career and uninterested in marriage. The novel certainly provides no basis for assuming that Deborah relies heavily on Theo to advance her career. Indeed, Klein presents a very non-traditional scene in which Theo is baking bread as a present for her because she won an award for her work.[5]

Klein presents adult male/female relationships in a less sterotyped manner than the ways in which they are treated in the movie. The differences between the characterizations of Wally, one of Deborah's co-workers, are monumental. In the book, Wally is a multi-dimensional character who appears throughout the novel, even after Deborah meets Theo. Wally is probably only a friend. He is estranged from his wife, devoted if somewhat ineffectual with his children, a pacifist who will not strike back when his former wife gives him a black eye. He shows movies on Sunday night which Brett, her friends, and his children enjoy. In the film, Wally is a totally unlikeable boob. He is fat, clumsy, and temperamental. The children hate his movies, and he becomes obsessively jealous when Deborah's romantic interest shifts from him to Theo. Once Deborah is no longer involved with him, the viewer never sees him again. By linking Deborah and Wally romantically, the film perpetuates the sterotype that women have a constant need for such entanglements, and it discounts the real value of platonic friendships. Furthermore, the denigration of Wally provides a perfect excuse for Deborah's preference for Theo, with his beard and his marginal jobs.[6]

Although the novel focuses predominantly on Brett's apprehensions about her mother's marrying, one can piece together what attracts Deborah and Theo to each other, and one can see to some extent how their own doubts about marriage are allayed. From the novel, one can infer that the source of attraction is shared social and political values and similar lifestyle. In both the novel and the movie, Brett/Jen is the catalyst for introducing the two, but the place of meeting and the role of the daughter is altered. In the novel when Brett meets Theo while minding some dogs for her mother's friend at a fashion show, he makes a favorable first impression on her, but she does not scheme to arrange a meeting with her mother as Jen does in the movie. Brett next sees Theo when she, her mother, Wally, one of Wally's sons, and one of Brett's friends are participating in a peace march in Washington. Brett introduces him to the group, and Theo rides home in Wally's car. The next time Deborah and Theo are together is when Wally is showing the Beatles' movie--"The Yellow Submarine"--one of Theo's favorites. The reader learns that Theo's apartment in Greenwich Village is near an apartment where Deborah and Brett once lived. Theo teaches

night classes to help young students who are having difficulty learning in regular classes.[7]

In the film, one knows nothing about the couple's values. The romance develops in traditional fashion. Their first meeting is a non-ideological encounter in a park. There are certain trendy touches in the movie, but they are reasonably apolitical and safe. For example, Theo drives a horse-drawn carriage in Central Park and cooks. The source of the romance is based on the old dependency theme. Disorganized, incomplete Deborah has found someone who can order her life and help her finish her book.[8] Theo has found someone who needs him.

In the novel, all three of the main characters worry about the changes which will result if Deborah and Theo marry, but only Brett's fears are enumerated. She is afraid that her life will become rigidly scheduled, that she and her mother will have to wear dresses instead of jeans, that her mother will have babies, and that her mother and Theo will leave her with sitters instead of taking her along with them.[9] Theo is concerned with the more amorphous question of whether he would be "any good married."[10] Deborah fears giving in to convention.[11]

In the movie, the romance is traditional. Theo and Deborah send Jen to camp so that they can be alone. He is portrayed as a person who wants to settle down and have children. He tries to get Deborah to change her lifestyle and career aspirations when he asks her to move to New England so that he can teach in a boarding school for upper-middle class children. Deborah does take a few pictures when she goes with him to visit the New England town, but it is apparent that her career, if it continues, will definitely become second to his.[12]

The creators of the movie completely eliminated one adult theme presented in the book. In the novel, the mother of Brett's friend, Evelyn, makes an unsuccessful attempt to commit suicide. Evelyn and her mother live in the same apartment building as Brett and Deborah. In leading up to the discovery of the attempt at suicide, Klein draws sharp contrasts between Deborah and Brett, on the one hand, and Evelyn and her mother on the other. Evelyn's mother, who is divorced, does not work outside the home. She is obsessed with finding a husband. Although she is naturally beautiful she feels that she must spend an enormous amount of time on make-up, perfume, and clothes in order to attract a man. Evelyn tells Brett that her mother's going out on dates is "work." Her mother does not enjoy dating, but she feels that she must find a father for Evelyn and a companion for herself. Evelyn's mother does not think that Deborah takes adequate care of Brett, and she is horrified at Deborah's slipshod housekeeping.[13]

Just as Brett reflects her mother's views, Evelyn mirrors her mother's ideas. Evelyn, who inherited her mother's beauty, is so vain that she does not want to wear her glasses. She is as concerned about having a father as Brett is unconcerned. She is

aghast when Brett tells her that she thinks that Theo is ugly--he is photogenic in the movie--and questions his masculinity when she learns that he cooks. In the early stages of the novel, neither Brett nor Deborah is sympathetic toward Evelyn's mother. When Evelyn's mother takes an overdose of pills because a suitor has jilted her, they realize that beneath her facade, she is human and vulnerable.[14]

The explanation for not including Evelyn's mother in the movie seems fairly obvious. First, Evelyn's mother had been the victim of the mores of a traditional society. Second, children should not be told that unhappy adults sometimes make half-hearted attempts at suicide, even if this is a fact of everyday life. The makers of the film seem to have felt once again that they could not flaunt convention.

The most drastic change from the novel to the movie is the ending. In the novel, when Deborah and Theo decide to marry, they do everything they can to allay Brett's fears. Brett helps Deborah and Theo select their new apartment, and they give her the master bedroom because they believe that children need more room than adults. They tell Brett she will share in the selection of a child for adoption. Finally, Deborah and Theo do not take a conventional honeymoon. Instead, they intend to take Brett with them to Africa to see and photograph wild animals--a trip Deborah and Brett had been planning before they met Theo.[15]

In the film, when Deborah finally decides to marry Theo, she is enormously pregnant. Having just completed a session of autographing copies of her new book, she concludes that she should get married and comments as an aside that she does not want the baby she is carrying to be called a "bastard." This scene violates the tone of the novel in several ways. First, the makers of the film have perpetuated an old cliche by equating feminine fulfillment with procreativity. The completion of her book had already been diminished by the need for her to have the support of her father and Theo. Second, even if the comment about her fears for her child were only a flip remark, Deboraah has a concern in the movie for conventionality which is not present in the book. Finally, from a child's viewpoint, Brett is in a much more enviable position at the end of the book than Jen is at the end of the film.[16]

The general question of the sharp divergences between novel and movie stem from different perceptions about those who would approve of their daughters' reading the book as opposed to the larger audience who might watch the film. In order to be successful, those who publish books can appeal to a more restricted audience than those who produce television films. It seems plausible that the smaller audience of parents who would recommend the book to their children would consist of upwardly mobile, middle- and upper-middle class Americans who have been liberalized by higher education. By contrast, those who might watch the movie include people of all political and religious beliefs and of all socio-economic strata. Thus, this larger

group might not approve in toto with the liberal and feminist themes that permeate the book.

The bigger and more important question is whether all the drastic changes from the book to the movie had to be made. With the possible exception of providing a different explanation for the reason why Evelyn's mother tried to commit suicide, the writers probably did not need to do what they did. Since the pre-eminent question of Deborah's having a child out of wedlock was presented and the scene where Jen discovers that Theo had spent the night was included, the writers could have gone ahead and made Deborah a strong female character. Carol Caldwell has done an interesting and suggestive, but not conclusive, study on women's reactions to advertising directed at them. She argues that women's perceptions of themselves are much less traditional than the ways in which women are presented in the ads. One might cautiously infer from this study that women are prepared to see strong female characters in a more general context. Since both the book and the film have Deborah and Theo opting for marriage, there is no reason for the absurdity of Deborah's pregnancy at the end of the film.[17]

One other major change from Brett the loving child to Jen the precocious assistant requires explanation. There seems to be a tendency in mass media to think that precocity is cute.

Nonetheless, it does seem that all of the changes were unnecessary. Deborah could have been a strong, unconventional woman, Theo could have been a truly unconventional man--not just a man with a beard who cooks, and Jen could have been an appealing and loving child. All the trendy touches could have been eliminated and the viewers could safely have observed what the three main characters were like from Norma Klein's perspective.

NOTES

[1]Norma Klein, Mom, the Wolf Man and Me (book) (New York: Avon Books, 1972). All references to the made-for-TV movie are to Mom, the Wolf Man and Me, Time-Life Television, 1980.

[2]Klein, passim.; Mom, the Wolf Man and Me (film).

[3]Klein, pp. 16, 69-70, 103, 138; Mom, the Wolf Man and Me (film).

[4]Klein, pp. 16, 18, 20, 46, 102, 110, 115, 145.

[5]Mom, the Wolf Man and Me (film); Klein, pp. 38, 101-10[illegible].

[6]Ibid., pp. 18, 25, 29-30, 81-82, passim.; Mom, the Wolf Man and Me (film).

[7]Klein, pp. 74-77, 84-87, 92-93, 101, 111-112; Mom, the Wolf Man and Me (film).

[8]Ibid.

[9]Klein, pp. 14, 18, 125-126, 150.

[10]Ibid., p. 141.

[11]Ibid., p. 153.

[12]Mom, the Wolf Man and Me (film).

[13]Klein, pp. 19, 51-52.

[14]Ibid., 19, 27-28, 103-104, 119-125.

[15]Ibid., pp. 151-152, 155.

[16]Mom, the Wolf Man and Me (film).

[17]Carol Caldwell, "You Haven't Come a Long Way, Baby," reprinted from New Times, June 10, 1977 in Social Problems 81/82, Annual Editions (Sluice Dock, Guilford, Ct.: The Duskin Publishing Company, 1981-82), 147-151.

READING TO CHILDREN: WHY NOT?

By
Dr. Barbara J. Craig
and Vicki Roth

About a year and a half ago, we initiated a city-wide campaign to encourage adults to read aloud to children. We gave workshops. We wrote and filmed public service announcements for television. We printed booklists. We even thought up a catchy slogan--"Reading to Children: The Best Gift of All." Yet the public didn't seem eager to "buy" this wonderful gift--until we listened and responded to their excuses. Now we begin all our presentations by answering the five most common arguments for not reading aloud to the children around us. And now we're convincing more and more people every day to invest their time and energy in this special gift to the future.

*"I couldn't do that; I'm no good at speaking/reading literature/telling stories."

If you can read at all, in any language, you can read to children. They benefit from the exposure to hearing words put together well, from imagining themselves in the new situations introduced by stories, and from close sharing with you--things you don't have to be an Academy Award winner to give them. Any adult who wants to read to a child, can.

Of course, some readers sound more interesting and stretch children's minds more than others. To become an even better storyteller, try these tips:

1. Read the book ahead of time, so you know the story. That way you can pause before climaxes, leave out unnecessary sections, and explain the pictures when an eager youngster turns the page before you've finished reading the words.

2. Start with short (5-10 minute) readings, on a regular schedule.

3. Make sure you and the child or children are comfortable and in an area free from distractions, especially from the TV and from people walking through.

4. Involve your listeners. Ask them questions about the story as you read. Point out how the pictures show what you've just read. If certain words or phrases are repeated regularly in the book, let the listener say these refrains with you after the 2nd or 3rd time.

5. Put drama in your voice. For young children, overact. Emphasize action words and key sentences. Read slowly and pronounce words distinctly. Add sound effects. Use gestures.

6. When reading a long story over several sessions, stop for the day at a suspenseful point--right before the hero escapes from the villian, for instance. That way, your listeners are eager for your next reading session. (Soap operas do this all the time.)

Take it a step at a time. You can do it; you can share the gift of reading with the children in your life.

*"I can't afford the time or money to read to my child as much as I'd like."

Reading aloud is one of the few things about childrearing that need not tax your finances and your time. Cheap or free children's books are everywhere. The place to begin is your public library, which makes a special effort to collect the best of children's literature, all free for the asking.

A child's own private book collection can be almost free. Garage sales, for example, are often sources of very inexpensive books. Used book stores typically sell books at half the cover price or less, and regular retail bookstores often maintain a discount table. And don't forget to ask your neighbors and relatives to pass along any books their children have outgrown.

Nor should your reading sessions take a big bite from your busy day. In fact, two or three 5-minute stories a day are probably ideal for most young children. For older children and adolescents, a chapter per day from a larger book will do nicely.Besides, a quiet moment with a child and a book can offer a welcome break for you in a too-hectic day, as well as provide some important shared time for the two of you.

*"The child I care about is too young (or too old) to be read to."

There is no such thing as someone too young or too old to hear stories read aloud.

Babies, even newborns, love to be held and read to--especially if the book's illustrations are large and include some distinct human faces and patterns.

Some of us hold back from reading aloud to older children and adolescents, for fear that doing so will hinder the development of the child's own reading skills. The research on reading suggests quite the opposite: young people who hear stories read aloud develop an attraction to books and a curiosity about life which encourages them to read on their own even more.

*"I don't see how I can make reading out loud compete with TV."

If your child is a TV fan, then use his or her interests when selecting read-aloud books. A little one who has just watched The Cat in the Hat needs no enticing to listen to the book. An older child who likes Star Wars might enjoy hearing The Martian Chronicles and other science fiction.

Don't underestimate the drama and excitement of a story heard out loud. The adventures you can create in your child's mind far outrival anything she can see on TV.

And remember that reading aloud provides something that TV rarely can--special time alone with you.

*"It won't do much good, anyway."

This just isn't true! Study after study shows that being read aloud to is one of the most important factors in a child's success in school. It can "only" increase their vocabulary, overall language development, academic readiness, reading skill, enthusiasm for learning, imagination, strengthening the bond between you and the child. (Incidentally, it also improves your own language skills and self-confidence.)

Reading to the children you care for is truly the best gift of all.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Rebecca J. Lukens teaches in the English Department at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, and is the author of A CRITICAL HANDBOOK OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE (Scott, Foresman and Co.). In the early 1960s, she lived in Chillicothe, and during that time she became interested in Ross County folklore, which inspired her to write the following tale.

THE MIGHTY HUNTER OF PAINT CREEK

by
Rebecca Lukens

It was a gaudy-bright fall on the Paint Creek. The red leaves of the oak and the star shapes of the sweet gum tree fluttered and shivered. Along the bankside trail came two hunters, each carrying a rifle. The Mighty Hunter of Paint Creek and his son Israel were hunting along the creekside, as they did summer, winter, spring, and fall.

The Mighty Hunter dropped his bunch of jackrabbits on the ground. Dry leaves crackled as the rabbits fell to the forest floor in a heap of long ears and legs.

"Yup," said the Mighty Hunter to his lean son Israel, "rabbit huntin's good this year. Lots of 'em, gallopin' through the woods, tails bobbin'."

The Mighty Hunter was out to stretch his legs and keep an eye on the game.

"A good hunter keeps a ready hand and a sharp eye, Is," he said.

He leaned his rifle against the spotted white bark of a giant sycamore and slumped to the ground. From the lunch pouch at his belt he took two chunks of dried brown stuff like animal hide.

"Jerky, son. Here's yours." They tugged at the salt deer meat.

"Stew's better'n jerky any day, ain't it, Is?" said the Hunter, chawing on his stringy mouthful. "For the trail, though, guess you can't beat this stuff. Some day, when you're a mite older, Is, why'nt you invent a way to keep stew and dumplin's hot in a leather pouch? Lots of hunters'll thank you."

He chuckled. "Job for you, Is."

Young Israel handed his father a blushing peach. "Here, Paw, have one," he said between bites. "Trail peach. They're sweet."

"I like a fresh peach." Paw smacked his lips over the dripping fruit. Then he leaned his head against the trunk and shut his eyes. "Now for an after-dinner snooze."

Suddenly there was a sharp crackle in the underbrush. The Hunter's eyes flew open. He held his body stiff.

"Don't move, Is," he whispered out of the side of his mouth. "That's deer noise. Leaves so dry, even a deer can't help a little rustle." He stared at each locust tree and honeysuckle bush, looking for a trembling branch.

"Ahhh-h-h, there he is behind the hickory. A be-yoot! Five pointer."

Slowly, slowly, his hand crept to his rifle beside him and his fingers grasped the stock.

Then he remembered.

"Aw shucks! Can't get a deer with rabbit pellets," he muttered. "Knew I shoulda brought something besides buckshot, but them deer pellets are pretty dang heavy to carry around. If I ain't specially lookin' for deer."

"That old buck is just hungerin' for the stew pot, Paw," whispered Is.

From behind his tree the hunter leaned out to see better. His hand touched the wet peach pit, still slippery under his fingers.

"Now here's a trick," he whispered. "Watch this, Is. I'll get him yet."

Silently he loaded his rifle, first from the powderhorn slung about his shoulder, then with the peach pit. He raised his gun to his shoulder and squinted down the barrel.

POW!

The buck took off.

He thundered into the trees, crashing through the berry bushes. The Mighty Hunter leaned back against the sycamore and shook his head.

"I'd a swore I got him. Right between the antlers. Well, guess he's still happy and kickin'. His good luck and my bad."

Midsummer a year later the Mighty Hunter of Paint Creek was out hunting. Israel, a year older, stepped noiselessly behind him. On the trail ahead stood the giant sycamore.

"Member this place, Is? It's where we almost got the five point buck with the peach pit. Son, let that be a lesson to you. Never brag if you almost got one. Almost is no better'n nowhere near. Almost never put stew in the pot."

The Mighty Hunter and Israel whispered to each other as they lifted one mocassined foot after another, setting them in straight lines along the creekside trail. Keeping sharp eyes out for game, they passed the old white giant.

Just then the Mighty Hunter spied a ripe peach, a rosy golden peach, fairly dripping with juice.

"Have a look at the purtiest peaches this year. Don't rec'lect a peach tree bloomin' here last spring, Is."

Israel turned to look. He and the Mighty Hunter each raised a hand to pick a rosy peach from the branch. Suddenly the whole tree sprang into the underbrush. Its

branches waved and its peaches fell.

The Mighty Hunter's chin dropped. He stared.

There, growing beside the tree, was a pair of five pointed antlers. A peach tree sprouted from the head of the buck.

The deer, tossing antlers and peach tree, vanished into the forest, and a white tail flicked goodbye.

The Hunter turned to Israel and winked.

"Son," he said, "let that be a lesson to you. Your paw's a mighty good shot."

2

Israel and his Paw hunted nearly every day, sometimes for the stewpot, but sometimes just for checking up.

"Paw, what's that big tree stump a-doin' that for?" asked Israel.

"A-doin' what, Is?"

"A-doin' what it's doin'. Kind of goin' in and out. In and out. Like it was alive or somethin'."

"You're gettin' mighty sharp-eyed, Is." They stepped a pace or two closer. "Yup, it's a-doin' somethin' all right. Can't tell what."

They stared at the half tree ahead of them. Long ago lightning had struck it and from the jagged top long cracks streaked down the blackened trunk. As they watched, the cracks grew wider. Then they grew narrow. Then wider again. Then narrow a second later. In, and out. In, and out.

"Can't figger that one, Is. But, whatever it is, it'll answer to lead."

The Mighty Hunter dropped a handful of pellets into his musket and fired. He reloaded and fired again. Again. And again.

"Whatever it is, Paw, you're a-gettin' it," said Is. "It's a-calmin' down. Ain't hardly movin' a bit now."

Dropping his rifle to his side, the Hunter stepped carefully up to the jagged tree. Cautiously Is stalked along behind him.

"It's quiet, Paw. All that movin' in and out has stopped. Maybe it's a bear."

Paw laced his fingers together and made a cup with his hands.

"Here, Is, put your foot in. Have a look inside."

"You sure it's not a spook, Paw?" Is set his foot in the Hunter's hands for a

boost up. He peered into the rough opening in the jagged trunk.

"Hey, Paw! This is somethin'! What I never saw before. Squirrels. Piles an' piles of squirrels!"

From the hollow stump Israel lifted squirrel after squirrel, dropping them to the earth beside the Hunter. Is counted, "Forty-eight, forty-nine, fifty--fifty squirrels. Hey, Paw, fifty squirrels! How could squirrels move a tree like they did?"

"Well, son, when you've hunted as long as I have, nothin' sprizes you. Them squirrels in there was just breathin'. Fifty critters breathin' together is a heap of breathin'. Reckon that old tree was just heavin' with breathin'."

The hunters tied the squirrels together by their hind legs and slung the bundles over their shoulders, two bunches hanging down in front and two in back.

"One mighty good find, Is," said Paw as they turned back. "Might as well go home. No lead for another shot. Got too much to carry now, anyway."

He put his hand on Is's shoulder. "Tell you what, Is. Wish you'd invent a easier way to make rifle shot. This meltin' and pourin' it into molds, and lettin' it set--that's an awful lot of work."

"How'd we know we was goin' to need so many, Paw."

"Yeh, Is, it's always a trouble. Knowin' when you're gonna need 'em. And when you're gonna drag a pouchful back with you clear from Three Locks or somewheres. Now when you get a mite smarter, you can figger a way to make firin' lead lighter and easier to carry around."

"Well, Paw, I'd rather carry home a load of squirrel stew than a pouchful of lead any day."

Is slid his hand into his leather pouch. "Here, Paw, I figgered this nail might come in handy. Load up with it. It's a tenpenny and might sharp."

Suddenly, out of the underbrush ahead of them shot a sleek red fox. The hunters stopped dead in their tracks. The Mighty Hunter raised his musket and aimed. Just as the fox passed the big walnut tree, he fired.

"Hey, Paw, you got him!" yelled Israel, running up to the tree.

He looked again.

"Well, I thought you got him."

There, pinned to the walnut tree, was an empty fox skin. It hung by the tenpenny nail through the brush of its tail.

Paw pointed up the bankside trail. "There he goes!"

Up the Paint Creek trail ahead of them, high-tailing it for home, ran the naked fox.

"Is, you maybe invented something already. You can't skin a fox with lead ball. And them tenpenny nails is a lot easier to carry around. What'll you do when you're a mite older? And a bit smarter? Eh, Is?"

And they tramped on home, down the Paint Creek trail, carrying the pelt.

But that's not all the hunting they did, you can be sure of that.

3

One balmy summer day Israel and the Mighty Hunter were lolly-doodling on the banks of Paint Creek, just sunning and resting and looking. As they watched, a huge ball that seemed to change shape and shift direction floated through the air toward them.

"By Jingo, Israel," said the Hunter, "that's the biggest swarm of bees ever I see, Must be ten million of them in there. All a-buzzin' and a-pushin' and a-tryin' to move against the little blowin' breeze."

Israel sat lazily beside his Paw, feet dangling in the creek.

"It's swarmin' time, Paw. I been seein' swarms, but I bet that's the biggest swarm ever happened in this valley."

"Is, that's the biggest swarm ever happened and this world. Get your mocassins on. We're goin' to follow it. Swarm that big'll make a mighty honeycomb. Lose sight of it in the trees, and lose sight of that honey, too."

Israel smacked his lips. "Could sure use a mite of honey on my hoecake of a mornin', Paw."

The huge, humming ball of bees drifted down the creek's course in plain sight, then turned from the creek and vanished in the woods.

"Cain't follow it now, Is. My guess is it'll stop over by Alum Cliffs. Sugar maples down there. Funny that six foot ball of bees can move at all, ain't it."

A summer later, when Is was bigger and up to carrying his own axe, the Mighty Hunter and his son again hiked the Paint Creek. They were searching for the giant honeycomb down by Alum Cliffs.

"Might be along here somewhere, Is. Swarm of twenty million bees has got to light somewheres." A moment later, Paw said, "Here's the sugars, and they're the best bee trees."

"How big a comb you figger they'll have, Paw? It's a whole summer since they swarmed that time. I bet that ball of bees was eight feet across."

Paw didn't answer. His eyes were ahead on a great dead maple that hung out over Paint Creek.

"That might be it," he muttered.

"Hoecake an' honey," thought Israel. "Hoecake an' honey. Sugar sweet an' runny." Dreaming, tasting honey, Is ran down the creek trail.

"This is it, Paw," he called. "It's that full! Honey's drippin' from the top!"

The Hunter walked around and around the tree, sizing it up.

"Ready, Is? Only way is to chop the old sugar down. Take a heap of axe swingin' to cut that granddaddy down."

Together Paw and Is swung and swung and swung again, sounding off a rhythmic "Chop, chop. Chop, chop. Chop, chop."

"Hoecake an' honey!
Sugar-sweet an' runny!
Mmmmmmm, mmmm!"

Is hummed between strokes. "Hoecake an' honey, sugar sweet an—"

"Save your breath, Is. Big job," said the Hunter. "Hey, by cracky—It's hollow from here on. Stand back!"

The Mighty Hunter swung three more mighty swings with his axe. The old maple creaked and cracked, and fell toward the stream.

From the hollow trunk a huge honeycomb dropped to the trail. Then, on a slippery stream of pure golden honey, the dripping comb slid toward the bank, over the edge and into Paint Creek. It made a splash so great the creek waters rose three feet all the way from Alum Cliffs to Three Locks. High on Paint Creek bank the rising water soaked the hunters' mocassins.

Carried by the rushing current below the cliffs, the giant honeycomb disappeared around the bend. Shading his eyes, the Hunter sighed.

"Well, Israel, don't know who we did a favor for, but it warn't us. Comb'll float clear to town. Get stuck by the bridge. Just wait and see."

Israel stared off downstream.

"Paw, I thought you were stretchin' it some when you said twenty million bees. You musta been guessin' low."

A week later Israel and his father stood out in the cabin yard inspecting the corn patch.

"You know that big honeycomb we set loose at Alum Cliffs, Paw? I heard tell it stuck there by the bridge in town, like you said. And in this hot weather, it just turned sour. Ain't it a shame, Paw? Turned clean to whiskey, Jed Rivers told me. And the birds are drinkin' it by the barrel."

Before the Hunter could answer, the sky grew black with birds. A huge flock, big as a thunderhead—from crows to cardinals, robins to jaybirds—dove down and charged into the corn.

"Why, look at those sassy robins," said the Mighty Hunter. "They're crazy drunk on our honey. I swear they're sassin' the jaybirds. What they doin' here, corn huntin' with the crows! Shoo! Shoo!"

The robins waltzed from row to row, pushing and shoving, feeding on corn as if they preferred it to worms. Red robins sassed bluejays, brown sparrows sassed black crows, and tiny hummingbirds sassed them all. The birds all grabbed and quarreled and staggered, fighting over everything they found.

"Is," shouted the Mighty Hunter, "toss the wash water on 'em. We need the corn more'n they do."

Is lifted the kettle from the open fire and threw it on the drunken birds. Squawling and squawking they flew to a high branch overhead. From the sycamore tree fluttered feathers, black and brown, robin red and jaybird blue. And those were the nakedest, maddest, and no doubt the soberest birds this side of Possum Trot.

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CLASSICAL VISION AND COMIC-EFFECT

IN

NATALIE BABBITT'S KNEE-KNOCK RISE AND GOODY HALL

by
Anita Moss

In a recent interview Natalie Babbitt remarked as she considered the nature of human existence, "I think we are here by some strange fluke, and that's fine. It's all very funny. Life is to me very funny, though I don't mean to put down grief, loss, and suffering. We all have that in our lives. But finally it is a great sort of accident."[1] In some of her most comically appealing stories for children, particularly Knee-Knock Rise (1971) and Goody Hall (1971), Babbitt also expresses delight and amusement at the absurdity of human pride with its insistance of taking itself too solemnly. At the same time, she expresses a sympathy for human beings and their moral dilemmas, their need to make themselves dignified. An important way that human beings endure, Babbitt suggests, is through the fabricating powers of imagination and through their capacities to create stories. An important way in which Babbitt deflates human pride and creates comic effects is through her cheerful and affectionate burlesque of literary convention.

In her spare, fable-like story, Knee-Knock Rise, the narrator uses a prologue to emphasize and to deflate the pretentions of the citizens of In-Step and to reveal their superstitions about the monstrous Megrimum, a creature who, they say with gleeful terror, lives high on the Rise, crying his despair and pain into the misty reaches of dark rainy nights. While the people of In-Step lack perspective on themselves and upon their surroundings, their imaginations have invented delicious terrors to enliven their monotonous lives. The Megrimum suffers unspeakable torment: "It moaned like a lonely demon, like a mad despairing animal, like a huge and anguished something, chained forever to its own tragic disappointments."[2] Babbitt's comic use of hyperbole here suggests that after all we must not take these disappointments too seriously.

The people of In-Step do in fact take themselves and their monster too seriously. Babbitt reveals that these worthy citizens are the denizens of a "flat and hungry land," that they lead flat and hungry lives, existences void of significance and value without the presence of the moaning Megrimum. She further shows up their characters (and reduces their pretensions) by exposing their patently economic and selfish motives for perpetuating the myth of the Megrimum. They have established a flourishing trade around the creature. Since In-Step was nearest the Rise, it had become "a sort of Mecca where you could go from time to time and renew your store of descriptions that strove endlessly to define once and for all the chilling sounds that wound down from the clifftop..." (p. 7). The flat blandness of this imaginary community appears in comic incongruence with their puffed-up vanities, a contrast emphasized in Babbitt's description of the mountains and their surrounding landscape: "Nevertheless the people who lived there were extremely proud of the mountains, for they were the only point of interest in a countryside that neither rolled nor dipped but lay flat as if

it had been knocked unconscious" (p. 3). Also, through poetic sound devices, Babbitt stresses the mythic qualities of the Megrimum when describing its keening moans: "Once more, from far above, the low moan came faintly to his ears. It rose slowly, threading to a wail again, and held for a long, terrible moment....At last the wail dropped, dwindled, died" (pp. 30-31). Under the spell of the myths about the Megrimum, the story's hero (or more accurately, "anti-hero"), Egan, sees the luminous landscape transformed. The moisture in the mist reminds the reader of the imagination, for each becomes "a tiny prism, filtering and fanning the dim light into a million pale rainbows of softest color" (p. 76). The work of a "wizard moon," such radiance seems to be an emblem of the transforming power of the imagination (rather like the transforming power of the frost in Coleridge's famous poem, "Frost at Midnight").

Inside the frame of the story, Egan, who initially promises to become the tale's hero, arrives on his first visit to Knee-Knock Rise in a slightly resentful state of mind. Yet Egan's attitude is clearly meant to represent a moral and critical view of the community of In-Step and their vision of the Rise; he rightly decides that the mountain is too big and proud. His initial antagonism becomes more pronounced when his self-satisfied cousin, Ada, and her disdainful cat, Sweetheart, assume a proprietary attitude about the Rise and its mythic monster. Ada uses scary stories about the Megrimum to establish a patronizing superiority over Egan, when she smugly comments, "Uncle Ott ran off up there and the Merimum ate him" (p. 15).

Despite his hostility, Egan soon falls under the hypnotic spell of the creature's brooding presence. He finds some of Uncle Ott's verses, and his loneliness is assuaged by Ott's lovable old fat dog, Annabelle. Although Egan had recognized In-Step's inflated pride, he is finally implicated in this pride himself. As he becomes more obsessed with the Megrimum, he dreams of his own heroic exploits: "What would it be like, he wondered, if he himself were to climb to the top and slay the thing that dreamed there? He would come down again with its head on a stick and they would be so proud of him...." (p. 43).

During In-Step's grand fair, Ada goads Egan into climbing the Rise. Possessed to madness by his dreams of glory and accompanied by a rather ignoble and corpulent beast, Annabelle, Egan set forth to slay the Megrimum. Once on the Rise itself, however, he discovers only his eccentric Uncle Ott, a kind of wise fool who penetrates the truth and prefers to turn his back on it, and a hot sulpher spring which whistles and reverberates through a hole in the cave when cold rain falls into it. There is no Megrimum.

In Knee-Knock Rise, then, Babbitt reverses her reader's expectations rather violently. Egan becomes disillusioned with his discovery, a reaction which intensifies when the people of In-Step refuse to believe him and ridicule his story. In bewilderment finally, Egan himself is left uncertain as to where reality leaves off and fictions begin. Almost in despair, he asks Uncle Anson what he thinks:

> 'Nephew,' said Uncle Anson kindly, 'I'll tell you what I think. I think it really doesn't matter. The only thing that matters is whether you want to believe he's there or not. And if your mind is made up, all the facts in the world won't make the slightest difference.'

Despite her classical (rather than romantic) perspective on proud human folly, her keen analysis of moral dilemma, her ironic inversions, reversals, and deflations of the young hero's dreams of glory, Babbitt's story reveals finally a deep, if amused, sympathy with humanity's need to fabricate fictions richer, stranger, more piquant and poignant than the flat facts of ordinary existence. As Babbitt expresses the book's

theme in the prologue: "Facts are the barren branches on which we hang the dear, obscuring foliage of our dreams." Egan's disillusionment yields to quiet acceptance and hope. He plans, humorously, still another visit to the Rise. Meanwhile, he must go home and face the everydayness of life in the flat country far from the mountain. Babbitt's fantasy calls the reader resolutely back to the world of human endeavor and the hard business of moral choice, but she suggests that there are real pleasures and uniquely human satisfactions in imagining and supposing, in making stories and poems out of terrors, dreams, and desires.

In all of her books, Babbitt has exhibited a keen consciousness of the conventions and traditions of literature. In Knee-Knock Rise the reader's understanding of Egan's disillusionment depends at least in part upon knowing the characteristics of the heroic quest romance. Babbitt's readers are not surprised to learn that of all her childhood reading, folk tales and Greek myths exerted the most potent influence upon her imagination. Yet while she is keenly aware of literary traditions, she makes remarkably complex and subtle use of them, weaving the threads of convention into richly appealing tapestries of her own. Critics have almost unanimously praised her style as both distinguished and distinctive. The voice in her stories is not an echo, but one which clearly asserts its own identity. It is a tolerant and amused voice which nevertheless takes both the story and the audience seriously. Babbitt seems to assume in Goody Hall, for example, that her child readers will understand and be amused by her playful burlesque of literary convention.

Goody Hall is a pleasingly light-hearted book which draws upon the conventions of myth, Gothic romance, and picaresque rogue literature to create a comic mystery for young readers. The estate of Goody Hall, like many castles in Gothic romances, is set apart from village and hamlet. Secrets and mysteries abound in Goody Hall. Something is even wrong with the grand, imposing tomb of the supposedly deceased Midas Goody.

Action is initiated in Goody Hall when Hercules Feltwright, a kind-hearted actor, becomes the tutor of Willet Goody, the mansion's lonely and spoiled child. Babbitt amuses readers who have read the story of the famous Greek hero's Twelve Labors when she takes rather outrageous liberties with the myth. She tells us that Hercules has enacted his own versions of the twelve labors; he has mashed an earthworm in infancy, conquered and killed a mad cat who had terrorized the neighborhood, and, finally, completes his twelve labors by descending into Midas Goody's tomb to confront a statue of Cerberus, who stands gaurd there. It is important that Babbitt's burlesque is done affectionately, not contemptuously, and she is careful to explain the significance of the hero and the character's discomfort and embarrassment when his mother points out the parallels between her son's comic adventures and those of the ancient Greek hero. In making the intent of her burlesque so clear, Babbitt avoids the possible charge that she is appealing primarily to an adult audience. Babbitt is equally explicit in her use of picaresque rogue traditions in Goody Hall, comparing her trickster-robber, Mott Snave, to Robin Hood. The author thus suggests to children that literacy creates an important sense of community in which readers and writers may share their delight and pleasure in literature.

While Babbitt relies upon the rather outrageous trappings of Gothic romance, myth, and rogue literature, liberally borrowing from tragi-comedy and farce with its mistaken identities, humorous disguises and hidden treasures, she resolves her story on a serious, humanistic note. She most often draws attention finally to conventional values in Goody Hall, in the end endorsing, without undue didacticism, the pleasures of home, family, and honest work. "Mott Snave" alias "Midas Goody" trades in his fantasy-identities to be himself — plain John Constant, a name suggesting everyday

duty and domestic endeavor. The boy, Willet, happily swaps Goody Hall, the mansion, for "a real dog, and a garden too, where you can dig and get dirty, and plant anything you like."[3] As Alfreida, the amiable Gypsy girl, remarks in the final scene of Goody Hall, the Goody family has "gone back and on to better things."

Babbitt, then, advocates that human beings keep their vision steadily upon the things of this world, but she also suggests that creating meanings from words and stories is a uniquely human capacity and one which she celebrates in both Knee-Knock Rise and Goody Hall. Without such stories human beings would lack hope and humor, two qualities which Babbitt says have helped human beings to survive.

NOTES

1 Interview with Natalie Babbitt, conducted by Anita Moss, April 10, 1981, at the Conference on Children's Literature, East Carolina University.

2 Natalie Babbitt, Knee Knock Rise (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1971), p. 5. Subsequent quotations will be taken from the same edition; page numbers will be indicated in parenthesis immediately following quoted passage.

3 Natalie Babbitt, Goody Hall (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1971). Subsequent quotations will be taken from the same edition; page numbers will be indicated in parenthesis immediately following quoted passage.

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CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN THE ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM: AN AUTHOR'S VIEW

by
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The reading of children's literature, especially oral reading by the teacher, was not recognized as a worthwhile learning activity in schools of the not-too-distant past. As a teacher back then, I can remember feeling uncomfortable when the principal walked in during one of my oral reading periods: a discomfort I never felt if his visit came when the class was involved in math or some other basic subject.

True, students back then were introduced to children's literature. For example, during my own primary grade schooling, readers such as the Beacon series used folktales and other literature as their basic content. I'm afraid, however, that any significance of the literature content was completely lost on both students and teacher as we, the students, struggled to master the vagaries of the phonic system and the teacher struggled just as valiantly to drill it into us.

This brings me to the most important point of the present discourse. I would argue that the discomfort just referred to stemmed from my not having a firm grasp of literature's nature and its true worth. I would further argue that teachers both past and present tend to lack a firm understanding of literature's nature and true worth, and that this tends to diminish their effectiveness in this area.

To argue such a position requires that we first answer the question "What is the nature and true worth of literature and of children's literature as a part of that literature?"

A reasonably sound answer is to be found in Howard Mumford Jones "enduring definition of the humanities" (One Great Society, Harcourt Brace JoVanovich, 1959, pp. 11-19) which reads:

> Those branches of human knowledge that have a special capacity, if properly interpreted, to mature the intellectual and moral powers and to quicken the sensibilities of the individual.

Jones includes within the humanities the traditional listings of the fine arts, philosophy, languages, and, of course, literature. His definition is based upon an underlying assumption which clearly differentiates the humanities from the physical sciences. This assumption holds that the most significant, the most enduring, human traits are those which do not lend themselves to scientific study and evaluation.

Think about this definition, and this assumption, for a moment. True, they do give a rather lofty view of man. And many today would say, in light of what is reported in the media, that such a lofty view is hardly justified.

Keep in mind, however, that Jones' statements claim only that humans possess potential intellectual and moral sensibilities, not that humans are born with these potentials fully developed. In fact his definition claims that these potentials need to be developed and that such development occurs especially through a proper study and interpretation of the humanities. Again, keep in mind that the humanities include the study and interpretation of literature and children's literature.

Now, what has all this concern with definitions to do with making you a more effective teacher?

In a most basic sense, concern with this definition requires you to address this question: "Do you, or do you not, believe that your students possess an intellectual and moral potential which your efforts as a teacher can help develop?"

Your answer, of course, will be resoundingly affirmative. Yet how many of you ever find time to ask the question and to reflect on your answer? Remember, what you are doing is important. Therefore do not let daily detail keep you from reaffirming your belief in human potential and your role in developing that potential.

Assuming then that there exists an intellectual and moral potential and a sensitivity to be quickened, how are you to achieve their development through a study of the humanities and, more specifically, through children's literature?

Again, the answer seems obvious: by having your students read literature. But the answer isn't quite that simple. Let's examine in a bit more detail the true nature of literature in general and children's literature in particular.

Let's agree, for purposes of this discourse, that literature refers to imaginative works of poetry and story rather than to the more factual, information-giving type.

Perhaps, at this point, some of you would like to interject that in today's schools free reading is accepted as an integral part of the school curriculum as evidenced by the popularity of schoolwide sustained silent reading programs, and that, therefore, students are now adequately engaged in reading children's literature.

As an author, I would respond by saying that much of what is being read in such programs is not literature. To begin with, much of it is factual content. All would agree that such content is worthwhile, and that it provides concepts and promotes reading skills. However, it does not particularly lend itself to developing moral potential and to quickening the individual's sensitivities.

More important, much of the story content being read is not literature which tends to promote humanities' goals as previously discussed. Thus you, as teachers, must constantly strive for understanding which allows you to differentiate between story content which is sound literature (as we are defining it here) and that which it is not: to see, for example, that Nancy Drew stories lack most of the elements of sound literature whereas stories such as "Treasure Island" do contain such essential elements.

The elements being referred to here are those which develop both the intellectual and moral potential and quicken the sensitivities of the individual. These are known to many of you and have as their focus themes which speak to the human condition in some poignant way but do not "preach" to the reader concerning the nature of human beings or how they should act. This does not mean that themes in literature do not strongly suggest. However, since human life is itself a mystery (the

essential elements of which lie beyond scientific study), these themes can only explore this mystery.

The elements of literature which support theme include: plots which quicken interest; specific settings which put the reader in a specific time and place; characterization which moves the reader to identify with the plight and problems of the story characters; and a style of writing which uses the rich heritage of our language—concrete words, rhythmic patterns, and various poetic devices. All of these elements stimulate creative imagery and thus help the reader to explore the mystery of being human.

Am I suggesting that stories of the Nancy Drew type do not contain the elements of sound literature and that your pupils should, therefore, be discouraged from reading them? No, quite to the contrary. To possess an appreciation for the values of literature as part of the humanities and to develop a basic understanding of the elements of sound children's literature should give you self assurance and thus make you better able to make intelligent choices in bringing your students in contact with literature. Such background should lead you to see that all story content partakes, in some degree, of the elements of sound literature. Also, one would come to know that these elements are somewhat elusive, and that one cannot therefore say, "This book is bad." That is, this book will not develop intellectual and moral potential or will not quicken the sensitivities of the individual.

Thus a deeper understanding of children's literature's nature and value does not go contrary to the more commonly held idea that any book a student finds satisfying—regardless of any judgement as to whether or not it is sound literature—enhances in that reader a love of reading and should be accepted.

Let me now give you an actual example of how not having an adequate understanding of children's literature's nature and value might work against your being an effective teacher in this area. Some years back, in my fifth grade classroom where oral reading was a daily event, I chose as the next book, Treasure Island. As you may know, the opening lines in this book provide a powerful presentation of setting and characterization.

Looking back as an author, I now see that the opening lines help make this story sound literature. However, I now also recognize that elaborate descriptions, while appealing to adult tastes, are often seen by students as holding up the action. In any case, when faced with student opposition, I capitulated and agreed to reading, Bomba, Boy of the Jungle, which choice they heartily supported.

This book, I now recognize, had little quality as literature and its being read to the class could not be justified as a worthwhile classroom learning experience. I would now argue that books chosen for oral reading should vigorously promote the students' intellectual and moral sensitivities. Bomba, Boy of the Jungle fell short in this regard. On the other hand, because it was a book the students liked, I should have actively supported its being read during their free time.

One last point. The best way to achieve a deep, personal understanding of children's literature is to read it regularly and seriously yourself. It will, of course, keep you in touch with what your students are reading and thus give you and them a shared interest. Even more important, it will, if consistently done, become a rich and interesting pastime. It will, in the best tradition of the humanities, develop your own intellectual and moral powers and quicken your sensitivities. If you seriously doubt that children's books can become proper reading fare for a mature adult, let me

recommend that you start out by reading the Newbery selections, especially those written in earlier years. These books are outstanding examples of sound children's literature. These are especially recommended for teachers who, somehow, find little or no time to read books (studies show there are many such teachers).

Keep in mind also that children's literature can be used in the classroom to enhance, specifically, higher level reading comprehension (thinking) skills. The National Assessment of Educational Progress' 1980 study, which assessed student performance in reading, thinking and writing in the area of literature, reports on the importance of thinking skills and how much more needs to be done to develop these in connection with literature.

In closing let me give you the position of that prestigous body with regard to the importance of thinking and literature in our modern life (taken from the National Assessment of Educational Progress' final conclusions 1980, p. 5). It reads:

> They (the thinking skills) will also be increasingly important at personal and social levels. Quality of life is directly tied to our ability to think clearly amid the noise of modern life, to sift through all that competes for our attention until we find what we value, what will make our lives worth living. What we value is seldom on the surface and, when it is found, can seldom be defended from incursions of the trivial without sustained efforts to understand it more deeply, to clarify its nature and to explain it to ourselves and others. A society of individuals equipped to do this and aware of the values their forbears have left for them in their literature need not fear the future. A society in which the habits of desciplined reading, analysis, interpretation and discourse are not sufficiently cultivated has much to fear.

Children's literature, as part of the humanities, provides not only the content upon which to base a value system but also serves as a vehicle for the practice of thinking skills in reading.

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CHILDREN'S LITERATURE INSTRUCTION: A STATE-WIDE SURVEY

by
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In recent years many studies aimed at assessing the reading preferences of children and their responses to literature have been conducted. The professional literature is also replete with critical reviews of books for youngsters and articles which focus on the use of children's literature in the elementary classroom. There has been very little research, however, on the manner in which children's literature is currently being taught in our colleges and universities. In order to fill this unfortunate void and establish an information base from which better introductory children's literature courses might be designed, a state-wide survey of professors of children's literature was conducted in an effort to answer the following questions:

1. What do children's literature professors perceive to be the primary objectives of their courses? Do these objectives vary depending on whether courses are offered through colleges of education or departments of English?

2. What content is being covered in introductory courses on children's literature? Does this vary depending on where courses are housed?

3. How are children's literature courses generally structured?

4. What textbooks, novels, and audio-visual materials are being used in children's literature courses?

5. What kinds of assignments are being required of students enrolled in children's literature courses?

6. What classroom activities have proven to be particularly effective in these courses?

METHOD

Preliminary Findings Based on a Review of College Bulletins

Prior to conducting this survey, the course catalogues of 45 Ohio colleges and universities were examined to determine where introductory children's literature courses are generally housed. These 45 institutions were selected for study because they have received approval from the Ohio Department of Education to conduct programs leading to kindergarten-primary, elementary, kindergarten-elementary, and/or educational media specialist certification.

Of the 45 institutions singled out for study, 39 (87 percent) offered at least one course in children's literature. Three (6.5 percent) offered a combined course in children's and adolescent literature and the remaining three (6.5 percent) offered a combination language arts methods and children's literature course.

As further revealed by the review of college and university bulletins, children's literature courses were generally housed in colleges or departments of education within the state of Ohio. This, in fact, was the case at 27 (69 percent) of the 39 institutions offering an introductory course in children's literature. Children's literature courses were housed in English departments at ten institutions (26 percent); one institution's course (3 percent) was housed within its School of Library Science and one institution (three percent) offered two seperate children's literature courses--one being housed in its College of Education, the other in its English Department. Whenever the study of children's literature was incorporated into language arts methods courses, these courses were offered through colleges of education. When it was combined with adolescent literature, courses were offered through both colleges of education (one case) and departments of English (two cases).

Sampling Procedures

Subsequent to the examination of college and university bulletins discussed above, questionnaires were mailed to professors of children's literature, children's/adolescent literature, and children's literature/language arts methods courses at the 45 institutions identified for study. Following the initial mailing in January of 1985, responses were received from 25 individuals. A second mailing, sent one month later to all instructors who had not returned completed questionnaires, yielded four more responses for a 64 percent rate of return (N=29). One additional questionnaire was returned unfilled, the respondent indicating that she was not a full-time faculty member and as a result was hesitant to answer the questions contained on the inventory.

Of the 29 instructors who returned completed questionnaires, 19 (66 percent) were education professors, nine (31 percent) were English professors, and one (three percent) was a professor of library science. Since the library science professor's course was cross-listed as an education offering at her institution, this instructor's responses were analyzed with those given by professors of education.

Instrumentation

In order to facilitate the formulation of a composite picture of children's literature courses across institutions within the state of Ohio and to compare education and English professors' responses, approximately 80 percent of the 58 items contained on the questionnaire required respondents to choose their own answers from a selected set of responses. This format was also employed to reduce the amount of time required to complete the instrument. The remaining 12 items, approximately 20 percent, consisted of a combination of open and closed questions. For example, "Do you employ a textbook in teaching your children's literature course? If yes, please indicate the author and title of the text you used the last time you taught the course."

The survey instrument, specifically designed for this investigation, was divided into seven sections, each of which focused on a different aspect of course design. Questions were classified under the following headings: Course Objectives (14 items), Course Content (25 items), Course Structure (5 items), Instructional Materials (5 items), Course Assignments and Activities (3 items), Assessment Procedures (1 item), and Miscellaneous Information (5 items). For clarity and convenience, the findings of this

survey will be reported as they relate to each part of the questionnaire. When necessary, information regarding the structure of items will be provided along with results obtained.

Course Objectives

Given 13 objectives and one open-ended question labeled "other," professors were asked to select the four items that best reflected the primary objectives of their introductory courses in children's literature. All 14 items and the percentage of respondents who selected each item among their top four choices are contained in Table 1 (see p. 60).

Table 1 reveals an unsurprising and somewhat comforting agreement among education and English professors regarding the overall objectives of children's literature courses. Both groups, for example, identified the following two objectives as their top choices: (a) gain familiarity with a wide range of children's books, and (b) develop and apply criteria in the evaluation and selection of children's literature. In each instance, over 70 percent of both groups selected these items for emphasis. Other objectives given high priority by both English and education professors were: (a) recognize the value of children's literature, (b) examine children's literature as it relates to the developmental needs and reading preferences of youngsters, and (c) develop strategies for sharing literature with children.

In addition to the shared perceptions already noted, a few differences did emerge. One such noteworthy finding was the emphasis given to the history of children's literature and issues related to book evaluation by English professors. Unlike their colleagues in colleges of education, English professors were also more likely to select those objectives dealing with the examination of illustrations in books and the use of children's literature in the content areas as being important. Education professors, on the other hand, were more inclined to select objectives dealing wtih the use of children's literature to foster the development of reading comprehension and language arts skills. None of the English professors, in fact, chose either of these objectives as being of primary importance.

Only three percent of the 29 respondents selected the objective dealing with acquainting students with journals and reference texts for emphasis. None of the professors identified the objective dealing with current research as one of their top four choices; no one offered additional objectives for consideration.

Course Content

Respondents were asked to make a judgement regarding the importance of 25 topics commonly covered in children's literature courses on a four-point Likert scale. Each item marked "very important" was assigned a value of 4.0; "of moderate importance," a value of 3.0; "limited importance," a value of 2.0; and "not important," a value of 1.0. Mean scores and ranks for each of the 25 topics contained in this section of the questionnaire can be found in Table 2 (see p. ,62).

As might be anticipated, the exploration of different types of literature and the evaluation of children's books were perceived as being the two most important topics deserving of attention when designing a introductory course in children's literature. Again, education professors focused on pedagogical concerns while English professors were inclined to place more emphasis on topics traditionally associated with literary criticism.

Course Structure

Ninety percent of the professors surveyed reported arranging their courses by genre or some combination of genre and theme or genre and methodology. The popularity of this particular form of organizatio may in part be due to the fact that most introductory children's literature textbooks are similarly arranged. Genres singled out for emphasis by more than 80 percent of the education and English professors were as follows: contemporary realistic fiction, picture books, traditioal literature, fantasy, historical fiction, autobiography/biography, and poetry. On the whole, education professors were apt to give more attention to informational books than were English professors. A disconcerting observation was the lack of attention afforded science fiction, drama, short stories, and children's magazines by both groups.

Two professors indicated that they uscd a thematic approach in structuring their courses; one reported employing a chronolcgical approach when sequencing topics for discussion. The most frequently mentioned themes follow: Death, Circles and Cycles, Multiethnic Literature, Shadows, and Sex Roles.

On the average, respondents reported spending approximately 35 percent of their time lecturing and 28 percent of their time leading class discussions. Twelve percent of class time was devoted to small group work and another 12 percent to demonstrations. The remaining 13 percent was equally divided between student led discussion and other forms of instruction, e.g., clinical experience, field trips, audio-visual presentations, microteaching, and guest speakers. Significant differences were not apparent when education and English professors' reported use of class time was compared.

When asked whether their course carried a field experience requirement, 52 percent of the 29 professors noted that such a component was built into their course.

Instructional Materials

Required Textbooks. Eighty-nine percent of the English professors and 74 percent of the education professors reported employing a textbook when teaching their introductory children's literature courses. The most frequently cited texts were:

1. Norton's Through the Eyes of a Child: An Introduction to Children's Literature,
2. Huck's Children's Literature in the Elementary School,
3. Lukens' A Critical Handbook of Children's Literature, and
4. Sutherland, Monson, and Arbuthnot's Children and Books.

Optional Textbooks. When asked, "are there suggested professional books that you encourage students to buy," 42 percent of the education professors and 11 percent of the English professors responded in the affirmative. Of the 38 optional books cited, 53 percent were introductory children's literature textbooks (e.g., Huck's Children's Literature in the Elementary School), 16 percent could be classified as book selection aids (e.g., Adventuring with Books and Reading Ladders for Human Relations), ten percent were literature anthologies (e.g., The Scott, Foresman Anthology of Children's Literature), ten percent focused on the authors of children's books (e.g., Hopkins' Books are by People), five percent were edited volumes containing selected readings (e.g., Barron's Jump over the Moon: Selected Professional Readings), and the remaining

five percent focused on poetry instruction (e.g., Esbensen's A Celebration of Bees: Helping Children Write Poetry).

Audio-visual Materials. Ninety percent of the education professors and 67 percent of the English professors reported using audio-visual materials in their coures. Weston Woods' The Lively Art of Picture Books was by far the most popular film. Filmstrips in Miller-Brody Productions' Meet the Newbery Author Series, Newbery Award Winning Books Series, and Famous Authors/Illustrators' Series were also frequently cited.

Several respondents indicated that they showed film versions of stories in their classes. Among the many titles mentioned were Weston Woods' The Golem, Rosie's Walk, Where the Wild Things Are, The Clown of God, Zlateh the Goat, and Strega Nona. Five respondents reported using videotapes of After School Specials and PBS programs like those in the Cover to Cover series. Also popular were films on authors and illustrators of children's books (e.g., Weston Woods' Ezra Jack Keats and Film Incorporated's Children's Author: Judy Blume), as well as films detailing the processes involved in the production of books (e.g., Waterman Films' The Story of a Book).

Four professors noted that they used slides of book illustrations to enhance their storytelling demonstrations. Sound recordings made by professional storytellers and tapes and records of poets reading their own works were among the audio materials most frequently mentioned.

Core Readings. When asked whether they had identified a core of children's books that everyone in their classes must read, 58 percent of the education professors and 68 percent of the English professors said, "yes." Listed below, beginning with the most frequently cited book, are the top ten required novels:

Charlotte's Web - E. B. White

Bridge to Terabithia - Katherine Paterson

A Wrinkle in Time - Madeleine L'Engle

Tuck Everlasting - Natalie Babbitt

The Great Gilly Hopkins - Katherine Paterson

Island of the Blue Dolphins - Scott O'Dell

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe - C. S. Lewis

Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH - Robert O'Brien

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry - Mildred Taylor

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer - Mark Twain

Other required novels mentioned by more than one respondent were as follows:

Abel's Island - William Steig

Call it Courage - Armstrong Sperry

The Dark is Rising - Susan Cooper

A Day No Pigs Would Die - Robert Newton Peck

Dicey's Song - Cynthia Voigt

Harriet the Spy - Louise Fitzhugh

A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich - Alice Childress

Julie of the Wolves - Jean Craighead George

Lady Ellen Grae - Bill & Vera Cleaver

The Master Puppeteer - Katherine Paterson

Nobody's Family is Going to Change - Louise Fitzhugh

Sing Down the Moon - Scott O'Dell

A Taste of Blackberries - Doris Buchanan Smith

The Wind in the Willows - Kenneth Grahame

The Witch of Blackbird Pond - Elizabeth George Speare

Twenty-five of the 97 titles identified as required readings were either Newbery Medal or Newbery Honor Books. Katherine Paterson was by far the most popular writer identified by both groups of professors. In fact, five of her novels appeared on these instructors' required reading lists.

As reflected by their choices, professors exhibited a bias for contemporary realistic fiction (50 percent of the 97 books fell into this category) and fantasy (25 percent of the titles) when selecting common readings. Less apparent were historical novels (14 percent), poetry anthologies (four percent), "classics" (three percent), informational books (two percent), and autobiographies/biographies (two percent).

Forty-two percent of the titles listed were published between 1970 and 1979, 22 percent between 1960 and 1969, and 12 percent of the books were published in the last five years. Six percent of the required novels mentioned were published prior to 1899. Titles falling in this category were as follows: Pilgrim's Progress, Pinocchio, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Treasure Island, Alice's Adventures is Wonderland, and The Blue Fairy Book. The percentage of required books falling into the six remaining decades between 1900 and 1960 are summarized below:

1900 - 1909	2%	1930 - 1939	3%
1910 - 1919	1%	1940 - 1949	4%
1920 - 1929	2%	1950 - 1959	4%

Assignments and Activities

Given a list of 13 items, respondents were asked to check those assignments and activities which they reularly used in their children's literature courses. All 13 items

and the percentage of professors who indicated that they employed each activity are contained in Table 3 (see p. 64).

As indicated in Table 3, English professors were given to select activities which might best be described as adult appropriate--writing critical/comparative papers, annotating books, participating in panel descussions, and maintaining reader response journals. Education professors, on the other hand, appeared to be more interested in introducing their students to strategies for involving children with literature. Hence their focus on creative dramatics, the preparation of booktalks, lesson planning, and the development of thematic teaching units in addition to participation in panel discussions and the preparation of annotations.

Professors were also asked to share an activity or two which had proved to be particularly successful with their students. What follows is a sampling of the ten most frequently given responses to this open-ended question:

1. Interviewing classroom teachers and librarians regarding their use of children's literature and the reading preferences of youngsters.
2. Field trips to local libraries and schools with exemplary children's literature programs.
3. Book binding demonstrations culminating in an assignment to write a children's book.
4. Demonstrations of some of the teachniques artists employ when illustrating picture books, e.g., collage, block printing, making marbleized paper, etc.
5. Participation in local Young Authors' Conferences.
6. Writing poetry and compiling poetry anthologies.
7. Examining picture books published in any given year and predicting which book won the Caldecott.
8. Interviewing children regarding their reading habits and preferences.
9. Sharing literature with children through reading and storytelling.
10. Researching one author/illustrator and summarizing findings for for class.

Assessment Prcedures

In order of frequency mentioned, children's literature instructors reported basing students' final grades in their courses on: (a) examinations, used by all 29 respondents; (b) class participation, used by 25 respondents; (c) papers, used by 20 respondents; and (d) number of books read, used by eight respondents. No difference were observed between English and education professors' repsonses to this item. Other vehicles used to assess students' performance were grades based on clinical/field experience, lesson plans, journals, poetry collections, literature files, and study guides.

Miscellaneous Items

Journals read by professors. When asked to identify what periodicals they employed to kep up-to-date with new books for children, 79 percent of the 29 professors selected The Horn Book as their first choice. The next five most frequently cited journals were: Language Arts, 45 percent; School Library Journal, 34 percent; The Reading Teacher, 24 percent; The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, 17 percent; and Children's Literature Association Quarterly, 17 percent.

Credit hours. When asked how many credit hours were associated with their introductory children's literature courses, answers ranged from two (21 percent) to four (three percent) semester hours. The majority response was three semester hours, accounting for 56 percent of the responses to this item.

Prerequisites. Forty-one percent of the professors indicated that their courses carried a prerequisite. Prerequisites varied from class standing to completion of specific courses, freshman composition and educational psychology being the most frequently mentioned.

Advanced courses in children's literature. Ten (34 percent) of the 29 instructors noted that their institutions offered one or more advanced courses in children's literature. In general, advanced courses were characterized as being issue oriented with more emphasis being given to literature for adolescents, reserach, and in-depth evaluation of selected works.

Conclusion

The results of this survey indicate that while English and education professors may agree on what they perceive to be the primary objectives of introductory children's literature courses, children's literature courses offered through colleges of education are decidedly different in focus from those offered through departments of English.

Table 1

Percentage of Professors Ranking Course Objectives Among Top Four in Importance

Objective	Total Sample (N=29)		Education Professors[a] (N=20)		English Professors (N=9)	
	Rank[b]	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Gain familiarity with a wide variety of books written for children	1	93	1	90	1	100
Develop and apply criteria in the selection and evaluation of children's books	2	72	2	74	2	78
Recognize the value of children's literature in the elementary school curriculum	3	55	3	68	4	33
Examine literature for children as it relates to the developmental needs and reading preferences of youngsters	4	45	4	53	4	33
Develop strategies for sharing literature with children	5	41	5	42	3	44
Develop teaching strategies for using children's literature to promote reading comprehension	6	21	6	26	7	0
Develop techniques and activities for teaching all of the language arts through the use of children's books	6	21	6	26	7	0

(table continues)

Objective	Total Sample (N=29) Rank[b]	Mean	Education Professors[a] (N=20) Rank	Mean	English Professors (N=9) Rank	Mean
Explore issues related to the use, selection, and evaluation of children's books (sexism, stereotyping, censorship, etc.)	7	17	7	5	3	44
Gain an understanding of the historical development of children's literature	8	10	8	0	4	33
Examine the techniques and styles used by artists to illustrate children's books	8	10	7	5	5	22
Explore ways in which children's books can be used in the content areas (math, science, etc.)	8	10	7	5	6	11
Become acquainted with various journals, newsletters, and reference texts which deal with children's literature	9	3	7	5	7	0
Demonstrate knowledge of current research related to children's literature and its use in the classroom	10	0	8	0	7	0
Other objectives not listed	10	0	8	0	7	0

[a]Includes the response of one professor of library science.

[b]Rank order of objectives based on percent.

Table 2

Perceived Importance of Topics Commonly Covered in Introductory Children's Literature Courses

Topic	Total Sample (N=29)		Education Professors[a] (N=20)		English Professors (N=9)	
	Rank[b]	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Exploring different types of literature (fantasy, poetry, etc.)	1	3.97	1	4.00	1	3.89
Selecting and evaluating books	2	3.66	3	3.63	1	3.89
Sharing books with children	3	3.59	2	3.74	2	3.33
Child development and children's literature	4	3.24	4	3.47	6	2.67
Reading interests and preferences of children	5	3.21	7	3.32	3	3.00
Extending literature through creative activities (art, drama, music, etc.)	6	3.10	5	3.42	8	2.33
Developing questioning strategies	7	3.07	6	3.37	7	2.44
Artists and their illustrations	8	3.03	9	3.16	4	2.89
Storytelling	8	3.03	8	3.26	7	2.44
Utilizing children's literature in the content areas	8	3.03	4	3.47	10	2.11
Designing literature programs	9	3.00	10	3.05	5	2.78

(table continues)

Topic	Total Sample (N=29)		Education Professors[a] (N=20)		English Professors (N=9)	
	Rank[b]	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean
Book selection aids	10	2.90	12	2.90	4	2.89
Book awards and award winning books	11	2.79	13	2.84	6	2.67
Censorship	12	2.72	11	2.95	9	2.22
Evaluating literature programs	13	2.59	15	2.74	8	2.33
Lesson/unit planning	14	2.55	12	2.90	13	1.67
Preparing booktalks	15	2.52	14	2.79	12	1.89
Audio-visual materials based on children's literature	16	2.48	16	2.63	11	2.00
Book conferencing	17	2.41	14	2.79	13	1.67
Patterns of literary response	18	2.31	17	2.47	11	2.00
The history of children's literature	19	2.21	20	2.05	8	2.33
Displaying books	20	2.10	19	2.21	12	1.89
Principles of reading/language arts instruction	21	1.93	18	2.26	15	1.22
Readability assessment	22	1.79	21	1.95	14	1.44
Reading theory and research	23	1.72	22	1.84	14	1.44

[a]Includes the response of one professor of library science.

[b]Rank order of topics based on means.

Table 3

Assignments and Activities Favored by Professors of Children's Literature

Assignment/Activity	Total Sample (N=29) Rank[b]	%	Education Professors[a] (N=20) Rank	%	English Professors (N=9) Rank	%
Annotations/bookcards	1	66	2	68	2	57
Dramatic activities	2	62	1	74	5	33
Booktalks	3	59	2	68	5	33
Panel and small group discussions	4	52	3	47	3	5[illegible]
Critical/comparative papers	5	45	5	37	1	6[illegible]
Lesson plans	6	31	4	42	8	[illegible]
Thematic teaching units	7	28	4	42	8	[illegible]
Reading response journals	8	24	8	15	4	44
Term/research papers	8	24	6	26	6	22
Journal article abstracts	9	21	7	21	7	11
Study guides	10	17	7	21	7	11
Webs	10	17	6	26	8	0
Reading autobiographies	11	14	8	16	8	0

[a]Includes the response of one professor of library science.

[b]Rank order based on percent of respondents selecting activity.

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NEWS

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RON MAROSTICA TO JOIN NCTE STAFF

Ron Marostica of Denver, Colorado, will join the headquarters staff of the National Council of Teachers of English July 15 as director for affiliate and member services, according to NCTE Executive Director John C. Maxwell. Marostica comes to NCTE from the Cherry Creek Schools in Englewood and Littleton, Colorado, where he has been district language arts liaison, K-12, since 1979 and has served as English department chair at Cherry Creek West Middle School.

At NCTE, Marostica will coordinate relations with the Council's 130 state and local affiliate groups throughout the United States and Canada. He will provide guidance to the nine NCTE assemblies and serve as liaison for ten NCTE commissions and standing committees, including the steering committee of SLATE (Support for the Learning and Teaching of English). He will also advise NCTE members and other professionals on matters of curriculum and instructional practice. He succeeds Robert F. Hogan in the NCTE post.

In the Cherry Creek district where he has taught since 1972, Marostica has been a member of the Committee on District Research and Assessment and the District Instructional Steering Committee. He wrote and edited the district's Language Arts Curriculum and Assessment Guide, K-12, for the years 1973-74 and 1983-84. He has directed scoring teams for the District Language Arts Writing Assessments and has developed and implemented articulation classes for K-12 classroom teachers.

Marostica has been active in both NCTE and its Colorado affiliate, the Colorado Language Arts Society. He was special services chair for the 1983 NCTE Convention, held in Denver, and this year has been nominations chair for the Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairpersons. For CLAS, he was 1985 spring conference chair, and served as co-chair for several earlier conferences. Marostica holds B.A. and M.A. degrees from Colorado State University.

DHA: 6/10/85

"MUTUAL GIVING" IN FICTION:

A PERSONAL RESPONSE TO JACOB HAVE I LOVED

by

Daniel P. Woolsey

> The only thing I can do for (my readers) is to give them now, while they are young, the best, the truest story of which I am capable. I have learned, for all my failings and limitations, that when I am willing to give myself away in a book, readers will respond by giving themselves as well, and the book I have labored over so long becomes in our mutual giving something far richer and more powerful than I could have ever imagined.
> (Paterson, 1981, p.393)

As stated so eloquently by Katherine Paterson in accepting the 1981 Newbery Award for Jacob Have I Loved, the art of reading as well as writing fiction is a shared process. The writer selectively dips from what Tolkien (1965) call the "Cauldron of Story" and then s/he personalizes the story with his or her unique experience in life, imagination and personal writing style. The reader then brings his or her knowledge and background of experience, willingness to enter the story and powers of imagination to the book. The author writes his or her own story; it is the intricate design of an individual life scrawled on the canvas of the world. But the appreciation of that design, the reading of the story, is a dynamic process in which the reader joins with the author in an act of verbal creation of what Rosenblatt (1978) has termed "the poem."

The character Melquiades in One Hundred Years of Solitude (Garcia Marquez, 1970) claims that, "Things have a life of their own. It's simply a matter of waking up their souls." The fiction that works for a reader is that which manages to take the material of our common experience and breathe life into it, so it has a shape and a form and a consistency and urgency about it which seems to coalesce as a soul, seems to exist despite us. Fiction takes on meaning for us as readers and works to interpret our world when it has this breathing soul which in turn wakes up our own souls.[1] Thus, mutual giving makes an arrangement of printed words on a page, "something far richer and more powerful that I could have ever imagined."

Katherine Paterson's Jacob I Have Loved (Crowell, 1980) is a book with a soul. Even after repeated readings, I find the book

to be a moving and explosive and joyous experience. Moving and explosive because I can clearly identify with Louise and her loneliness and the anguish of isolation, whether real or imagined. Paterson's stark visualization of Rass Island is vivid, and the claustrophobic atmosphere of the Bradshaw family and the small community is painfully real. But as I read I also experience joy, because Louise works through her problems. At its core this is a book about reconciliation (Paterson, 1982, p. 327). Louise leaves the island and discovers a useful and loving life separate from the shadow of her painful adolescence. She comes to see her sister, her parents and herself, as well as her God, in a new way when she steps away from them, just as an impressionistic painting takes on new clarity and beauty when we step back and view it from a comfortable distance.

This is a book of considerable complexity. I have chosen only two elements of the book which I believe to be fundamental to the essence of its soul, though there are many others which could be considered. I will look at Paterson's use of setting and characterization (as regards her protagonist, Louise Bradshaw), and how she employs them to bring the book and my imagination to life.

In this book, as in the Green Knowe stories of Lucy Boston, the setting of the story is of prime importance. In a sense it is another character in the drama of Louise's torturous journey toward maturity. The sights, smells and sounds of the island pervade the book. The sea which surrounds the island is not just a symbol of Louise's isolation. It is an obsession, a force which rules the islanders. Paterson's description of the sea is embroidered with religious, almost liturgical language:

> Water was the element in which our tiny island lived and moved and had its being...For the men of the island, except for the preacher and the occasional male teacher, the Bay was an all-consuming passion. It ruled their waking hours, sapped their bodily strength, and from time to tragic time claimed their mortal flesh.
> (Jacob..., p. 37)

And though "the water was the untamed kingdom of the men," the women of the island are also under its domination however they might struggle to resist its power over their lives. It is not surprising that Louise's grandmother constantly repeats a chant to drive this power away: "I hate the water." Even in death the inhabitants of Rass Island are not safe, for their coffins may be unearthed and thrown into the depths of the Bay by the same power which has ruled their lives.

Paterson brings the world of Rass Island to life through the consistent use of metaphor which evokes the sea (for example, the

Baltimore Sun is Louise's "porthole on the world"). This figurative language is anchored in a carefully researched recounting of the arts of crabbing and oyster harvesting and detailed descriptions of the village with its ferry house and crab houses.

But there is another aspect of this setting which is no less critical to the story. That is, the fact that Rass Island has lived under "the fear and mercy of the Lord" since the early nineteenth century. Thus, appropriately the first glimpse of the island which Louise catches when she returns as an adult is the church steeple. The local church, with its passion for rules and conformity, towers over the community casting a shadow which is as hard to resist as the inexorable pull of the sea.

This is an enclosed and in-grown community in which the arrival of a strange man causes ripples of rumor and gossip for weeks, where after missing one church service Louise is haunted by her grandmother's friend inquiring after her health, both physical and spiritual. It is the kind of village where Hiram Wallace is remembered as a coward fifty years after he responded with raw emotion and fear to a storm on the Bay.

The rugged, intense and suffocating atmosphere of this imaginary island will remain with me long after I have forgotten the names of its inhabitants. Rass Island works well as a metaphor for the alienation and claustrophobia of adolescence, but is also has an unforgettable strength and beauty of its own.

Brought up the child of missionary parents and then in a small rural hamlet, my childhood was not unlike Katherine Paterson's and that of Louise Bradshaw. The Bible is also, "the earth from which I spring" (Paterson, 1981, p. 387). It is natural then, that the small town ambience as well as the many Biblical allusions in Jacob Have I Loved would awaken my soul. Through Louise, Paterson is wrestling with her own demons of guilt and envy, with "the untamed beast within the reformed and civilized part of (her) nature", and with religion which can bind with chains of legalism or provide freedom and peace. These are labyrinthian questions with which I too struggle. I haven't yet emerged from the other side, but Katherine Paterson and Louise Bradshaw are walking with me now and I can take comfort and encouragement in that.

I say that Louise is walking with me because she has become very real for me as I have read and reread this book. I feel that I know her well, for in her I see much of myself. Louise is an intelligent and sensitive girl who describes herself at the outset this way: "At thirteen I was tall and large boned, with delusions of beauty and romance." She is intense and demanding of herself and those around her. In fact, she seems very much like her caustic and unpredictable grandmother. One wonders if

Grandma Bradshaw would be the pathetic figure she is if she had been able to leave the island in her youth as do Caroline and Louise.

Louise feels inadequate and unloved. She is intensely aware of the attention given to her twin sister Caroline, at first because she was a sickly and fragile child and now because of her beauty and musical ability. Louise has had a chip on her shoulder almost from birth. "Where was I?" she demands of her parents over and over when they speak of the day the girls were born. She searches desperately for her place in the world, and seems unalbe to fit into the life of the island, the church and her family.

She suffers from tremendous guilt over her emotions which run rampart as she ventures unsteadily (and with little help) through the swiftly changing currents of puberty. Louise feels hatred for Caroline and sexual desire for the Captain; she struggles to come to terms with the emotional and physical changes she is experiencing. Her sense of alienation from her family and the island is no more strongly felt than her sense of separation from God. That she is cut off from God's mercy seems to be confirmed by the Apostle Paul--"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."--and by her venomous grandmother who repeatedly spits those fearful words into her face.

But perhaps I am overstating my case. These are the passionate and deeply felt sentiments of an intense young girl in the midst of the buffeting currents of adolescence. As Louise learns from the Captain, who had experienced a similar isolation and banishmentt from Rass Island, "Youth is a mortal wound," but this too will pass.

Louise responds to the hurtful wounds of adolescence by closing up like an oyster, but through the war and the resulting opportunity to work closely with her father on the Bay, Louise is finally able to convince herself of her own worth and of her parent's genuine love. She still must leave Rass Island in order to be free of the shadow which has haunted her since birth, but she leaves of her own volition and not as a victim running away.

In retrospect Louise can see that she is dealing with a natural part of life, and not with a cruel and angry God or a hateful family. Looking back as an adult, she writes:

> Life begins to turn upside down at thirteen. I know that now. But at the time I thought the blame for my unhappiness must be fixed--on Caroline, on my grandmother, on my mother, even on myself.
> (Jacob, p. 21)

As a mother and a midwife, Louise helps a young Appalachain mother to give birth to twins. In caring for the weaker second child, the breech birth, she comes to a new depth of understanding and compassion for her parents, for Caroline and even for herself. She realizes that we all do the best we can with the life we are given to lead. The final note is one of reconciliation.

As sub-creator (Tolkien, 1965), the writer has a unique privilege. Much like a stage director orders a dramatic production, s/he orders the universe of the story: discovering the leading players, building the sets and stage flats and writing the scripts. But the writer must create from what s/he knows and has experienced, from reality, whether grounded in physical reality or the imagination. Skillful and effective artists are careful observers of their world, looking for connections and for discontinuities and struggling to make sense of it all.

If the writer has been an accurate and perceptive recorder and transmitter of that world, the audience--we the readers--will recognize ourselves and our world. Our souls will be aroused and we will not be the same after reading the book. Books like Jacob Have I Loved and writers like Katherine Paterson provide literary experiences of "mutual giving" which allow us to stretch and extend our understanding of ourselves and our world. Through them we catch glimmers of truth and reality which lend meaning to the human experience.

Notes:

1. I am indebted to Gregory Maguire of the Simmons College Center for the Study of Children's Literature for the notion of the "soul" of a piece of fiction.

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FOLKLORE IN RECENT CALDECOTT BOOKS

by

Joan S. Nist

The Caldecott picture books, both those receiving the Medal itself and those designated in the Honor category, receive siginificant publicity and are usually purchased for juvenile collections in school and public libraries. Thus they are readily available to children from preschool years through third or fourth grade. The works are selected for the "distinguished" quality of their illustrations. The American Library Association has defined the task for the committee which chooses recipients of the award: consideration of "Excellence of pictorial interpretation of story, theme, or concept;... of delineation of plot, theme, characters, setting, mood or information through the pictures."[1]

Study of Caldecott books of the past fifteen years (1970 - 1984), both Medal and Honor recipients, indicates that many of the award-winning artists were inspired by stories or themes from folklore. Over one-third of the books, twenty-two of fifty-nine, are adaptations or re-creations of folk themes. The percentage of Medalists is even higher: sixty percent, nine of fifteen, including the Medal winners for six consecutive years, 1971 - 1976. Others of the books, like Arnold Lobel's Fables (1981 Medal)[2] and Maurice Sendak's Outside Over There (1982 Honor) suggest folk influences on their author-artists' creative texts.

The twenty-two Caldecott works from various folk cultures serve as an indication of recent emphasis on multiethnicity in the United States, a receptivity to material from the heritage of many groups. Close examination shows patterns of response to ethnic awareness and also points to areas still unfulfilled.

For example, four of the books are from African folklore. A Story, A Story (1971 Medal) is Gail Haley's retelling of an Anansi tale; it was followed two years later by Gerald McDermott's Anansi the Spider (1973 Honor), a tale from Ghana which he first used in animated film format. Verna Aardema retold Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears (1976 Medal), illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon; and Marcia Brown received an unprecedented third Caldecott award for illustrations of Blaise Cendrars' Shadow (1983 Medal). Together with seven other Caldecott books wit black and/or African themes or characters, these four stories reflect the growing contribution to children's literature of works with black backgrounds.[3]

A second group represented among the Caldecotts by stories from their folklore is the native American. William Sleator retold a Tlingit legend from Alaska, The Angry Moon (1971 Honor), illustrated by Blair Lent. Gerald McDermott, turning to Pueblo

lore, adapted the myth of Arrow to the Sun (1975 Medal). Paul Goble drew from Indian folk motifs in The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses (1979 Medal), and Olaf Baker told the Manitoba legend of Where the Buffaloes Begin (1982 Honor), with drawings by Stephen Gammell. Four other Caldecott Honor books, all by Byrd Baylor present aspects of Indian culture in poetic texts.

Though Caldecott awardees thus represent both blacks and native Americans, there are limitations because of the realtively small number of works. For example, the young audience of these picture books gets a sense of ties to Africa, but not of American black folktales. The setting of place also interacts with folklore of the native American: the focus is in the west, north to Alaska and Canada and south to the Arizona-Sonora desert, but there is no concept of the life of nonwestern Indians. Nevertheless, these books enrich the perspective of children, enhancing their appreciation of tales from a variety of cultures.

One other broad category is represented among recent folkloric Caldecotts: European tales. Of these, three are versions of familiar Grimm stories: Randall Jarrell's translation of Snow-White and the Seven Dwarfs (1973 Honor), illustrated by Nancy Ekholm Burkert; Ilse Plume's retelling of The Bremen-Town Musicians (1981 Honor); and Trina Schart Hyman's adaptation of Little Red Riding Hood (1984 Honor).

Tomie de Paola retold an amusing Calabrian version of the sorcerer's apprentice story in Strega Nona (1976 Honor), and Margot Zamach portrayed the humor of a Yiddish tale in It Could Always Be Worse (1978 Honor). Beverly Brodsky McDermott's work is in contrasting mood: a somber story of the medieval Prague ghetto, The Golem: A Jewish Legend (1977 Honor), while Uri Schulevitz's The Treasure (1980 Honor) evokes the sense of an East European storyteller.

The only Medalist of the European folktales is Harve Zemach's Duffy and the Devil (1974 Medal), a Cornish version of Rumpelstiltzkin/Tom Tit Tot, illustrated by Margot Zemach. Two books illustrate nursery rhymes: Janina Domanska's If All the Seas Were One Sea (1972 Honor) and Susan Jeffers's Three Jovial Huntsmen (1974 Honor). The latter, like other Mother Goose verses, has lost its original adult intent: only the name of St. David's Day hints at its original anti-Welsh bias.

Here, too, representation is uneven: there are examples from the popular German Household Tales and from Eastern European Jewish tradition -- from which also came the 1978 Nobel laureate, Isaac Bashevis Singer, whose works of folklore preserved much of Yiddish culture and have enriched children's literature. But there are no tales from Ireland or France or the great collections of Scandinavia and Russia.

Four other books from folk sources complete the examination of Caldecotts of the fifteen years from 1970-1984. Two are American folktales, both illustrated by Nonny Hogrogian: One

Fine Day (1972 Medal) and The Contest (1977 Honor). The former with its cumulative repetition is appropriate for children in the early grades; the latter, with its sophisticated traingle-of-tricksters, is for a middle-grade audience. A third work is also from the Near East -- via the Netherlands. Peter Soler's Noah's Ark (1978 Award) depicts the Genesis story, a wordless picture book except for single lines at beginning and conclusion and a brief translated prefatory poem by the seventeenth-century Jacobus Revius.

Finally, only one book represents Asia: Arlene Mosel's retelling of The Funny Little Woman (1973 Medal), illustrated by Blair Lent. This sole representation from the most populous region of the world indicates potential sources for artists seeking to present a broader range of folktales to American children in picture book format. With the growing Hispanic and Asian groups in this country may come books of folklore from their varied heritages. Regional folklore can expand children's background; for example, Marcia Brown's illustrated adaptation of a folklore from a state of great cultural diversity -- Hawaii, Backbone of the King, is going to be reissued soon.

Folktales possess lasting qualities which ensure a continuing appeal. Ethel Heins, editor of The Horn Book, has stated that professionals active in the field of children's literature should urge publishers to keep fine books in print, despite economic strictures.[5] A diversity of publishers, seventeen, issued these twenty-two Caldecott picture books of folklore. Most significant is the range of artistic interpretation of folkloric themes presented by the eighteen artists of these works: for example, the brilliant colors and geometric design of McDermott; the earth tones and native symbols of Goble; the myriad details and pictorial humor of Spier; the meticulous re-creation of background by Burkert. All indicate that the vitality of the folklore which inspired their illustrations will lead to more verbal-visual works to enrich children's literature.

Notes

[1]Statement on the Caldecott Award adopted by the ALSC Board, American Library Association, 1978.

[2]Date cited is that of Caldecott recognition; publication date is the prior year.

[3]Two of the four alphabet books and the only counting book among the Caldecotts of these years had African backgrounds: Margaret Musgrove's Ashanti to Zulu (1977 Medal), illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon, who had also received the 1976 Medal; and Muriel Feeling's books Jambo Means Hello (1975 Honor) and Moja Means One (1972 Honor), both illustrated by Tom Feelings.

[4]By the University of Hawaii Press; the Scribner's edition has long been out of print.

[5]Conference of the Children's Literature Assocation, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, May 1984.

Bibliography

Aardema, Verna. Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears. Dial, 1975. Illus. Leo and Diane Dillon. 32 pp.
Mosquito -- through iguana, python, rabbit, crow and monkey -- causes Mother Owl not to wake the sun.

Baker, Olaf. Where the Buffaloes Begin. Frederick Warne, 1981. Drawings by Stephen Gammell. 48 pp.
At the legendary southern lake, Little Wolf cries to the buffalo, who stampede and save his people.

Cendrars, Blaise. Shadow. Scribner's, 1982. Trans. and illus. Marcia Brown. 40 pp.
Shadow does not speak or sleep or hunger but follows man; "It is a game. A dance."

de Paola, Tomie. Strega Nona. Prentice-Hall, 1975. 32 pp.
Big Anthony repeats Strega Nona's song so the magic pot makes pasta, but only she can stop it.

Domanska, Janina. If All the Seas Were One Sea. Macmillan, 1971. 32 pp.
If the great man used the great axe to fell the great tree into the great sea: splish splash!

Goble, Paul. The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses. Bradbury, 1978. 32 pp.
An Indian girl, lost among the wild horses, lives with them and becomes a beautiful mare.

Haley, Gail E. A Story, A Story. Atheneum, 1970. 36 pp.
Ananse, the Spider man, pays the Sky God's threefold price for stories: leopard, hornet, and fairy.

Hogrogian, Nonny. The Contest. Morrow/Greenwillow, 1976. 32pp.
Robbers Hmayag and Hrahad have a contest for Ehleezah, betrothed to both, and decide she doesn't deserve either.

Hogrogian, Nonny. One Fine Day. Macmillan, 1971. 32 pp.
The fox gets grain, egg, bead, jug, water, and grass to replace milk he took and to regain his tail.

Hyman, Trina Schart. Little Red Riding Hood. Holiday House, 1983. 32 pp.
Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother are eaten by a wolf but rescued by a huntsman.

Jarrell, Randall. Snow-White and the Seven Dwarfs. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972. Pictures by Nancy Ekholm Burkert. 32
Her stepmother, the Queen, tries to kill Snow-White, who has fled to the dwarves' house.

Jeffers, Susan. Three Jovial Huntsmen. Bradbury, 1973. 32 pp.
Three huntsmen on St. David's Day find nothing but a ship, the moon, a hedgehog, and a hare.

McDermott, Beverly Brodsky. The Golem: A Jewish Legend. Lippincott, 1976. 42 pp.
Rabbi Lev makes the Golem to guard the Prague ghetto but under attack it runs amok.

McDermott, Gerald. Anansi the Spider. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972. 46 pp.
Anansi, saved by his six sons, cannot decide which to reward, so God Nyame keeps the moon prize.

McDermott, Gerald. Arrow to the Sun. Viking, 1974. 42 pp.
The Boy proves the Sun is his father through the four Kivas: Lions, Serpents, Bees, and Lightning.

Mosel, Arlene. The Funny Little Woman. Dutton, 1972. From a tale by Lafcadio Hearn. Pictures by Blair Lent. 40 pp.
Underground, the little woman cooks rice for the wicked oni, but she escapes with the magic paddle.

Plume, Ilse. The Bremen-Town Musicians. Doubleday, 1980. 32 p
No longer useful, a donkey, dog, cat, and rooster leave home and frighten robbers with their music.

Shulevitz, Uri. The Treasure. Farrar Straus Giroux, 1978. 32 pp.
Poor Isaac dreams that he should seek treasure in the capital city but returns, finding it at home.

Sleator, William. The Angry Moon. Little, Brown, 1970.
Pictures by Blair Lent. 48 pp.
Helped by a grandmother in the sky country, Lupan rescues his friend Lapowinsa from the moon.

Spier, Peter. Noah's Ark. Doubleday, 1977. Poem by Jacobus Revius. 48 pp.
Noah's family and paired animals enter the ark before the Flood and are saved by God.

Zemach, Harve. Duffy and the Devil. Farrar Straus Giroux, 1973. Illus. Margot Zemach. 40 pp.
Duffy bargains with the devil to spin and knit for Squire Lovel till she learns Tarraway's name.

Zemach, Margot. It Could Always Be Worse. Farrar Straus Giroux, 1976. 32 pp.
The Rabbi advises a man how to make his crowded family hut peaceful by adding, then removing, animals.

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Opening The Doors Of Communication Through Children's Literature

By
Tammra L. Carter

Children's literature can and has opened the doors of communication between children and adults. It can be used as a learning tool to help shape a child's outlook on the world and life in general. Moral and ethical values can be transmitted through stories and characters a child can relate to and most importantly you can help a child develop a good self image and expand imagination.

In an era where television dominates our lives, children's literature is an excellent way to establish or restablish communication betwen an adult and a child. In school or at home children's literature can help establish an environment where a child will feel comfortable communicating his or her thoughts and feelings to the teacher or parent. The possibilities are endless and it doesn't take great amounts of time out of your day. Reading aloud gives you special time each day with a child and helps exercise their imagination, something television limits a child from doing. It's also a proven fact that children learn better when read aloud to. I tutor children on othe weekend and when they are read aloud to they have a stronger grasp of understanding about the work we have just covered. It enhances their interest in reading themselves and increases their vocabulary. When you read aloud to a child you both enter another world that is temporarily closed to the outside world.

Children are naturally curious and will explore ideas with or without help of an adult. An adult who satisfies this curiosity with children's literature will be amazed at how much they will learn about a child and how he/she thinks and may be shocked at what they learn about themselves. Adults often don't give children enough credit for thinking and making decisions on their own. Even a young child can tell the moral issues of right and wrong. Important morals and values can be taught in an enjoyable way through children's literature. A book with characters children can relate to and situations thay can understand will go much further in enhancing moral education than hours of lectures on right and wrong. A child's personality and ability to communicate with others is developed very early in childhood. Adults should use this early period to teach the children religous or moral values the adult wants the child to understand and adopt. If adults wait too long to teach the child these values and morals the child will pick up ideas from other

people that may or may not express the values they want that child to adopt. By the time children can read themselves they may have lost interest in books or may lose interest in reading altogether.

Children learn alot by imitating adults and will act out feelings and beliefs in play. Children's literature gives them role models to learn from. This can be especially helpful in large families where time is limited with each child and also in one parent families where there is only one adult to learn from.

Reading to children and having them ask questions will enable an adult to understand how a child feels about himself and how much he understands others. Using literature an adult can show a child that everyone is special and unique and no matter how much they may be unlike other children that difference is what makes us all special. During a time when peer pressure is just beginning to be felt, children's literature can help a child maintain a good self image and stories can help a child understand and eliminate everyday problems that sometimes bother them more than we as adults realize.

One of the greatest benefits a child gets from interacting with an adult is the feeling of being loved. In a society where time is a precious gift we can still take five minutes a day to share a book with a child. This can be a very private and happy time for both the child and the adult. Books such as Winnie the Pooh and Raggedy Ann are great examples of what love and communication can be all about. The old saying that children live what they learn is still very true today. If a child is taught that he/she is loved then that child may find is far easier to give love to others. Love, caring, and sharing seem like very simple concepts but we all need to experience these things throughout our lives. A well loved child will be more emotionally able to handle problems in life knowing that someone cares. The older children get, the more books can help them learn to understand and cope with facts of life such as death, divorce, drugs, and other sometimes devastating experiences. Books can often provide the method and words to help a child when we as adults cannot.

Many children will never pick up a book on their own, especially if the adults they come in contact with don't read and enjoy books. Using literature such as poetry and stories with a musical flow to them can teach and enhance a child's enjoyment of books. Children often won't pick up a book unless forced because they were never taught what a magical enjoyable world they could find in books. Adults especially should continue to read children's literature for themselves. As adults we are forced to live and work in a very realistic environment, as we need children's literature as much if not more than children do. Give yourself a valuable gist today! Pick up a book and share it with a child!

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Come With Me

Come with me where fuchsia fish glide in the sky
Where content cats swim in the waters of chanting sprites and mermaids
And ebony birds bark out the words of great philosophers

Come where towering trees sparkle with blue diamond leaves
Extended skies are green with pink clouds even when aqua rain falls
And the grass we softly walk upon is violet

Come where we
Can dance leaping leaps
Sing sad songs
And paint crayoned pictures in puce, pearl, and pink

Come with me to a land of tales untold
Poems unwrittem
And lives not yet in bloom

Linda Zoeller

Visions of a Cloud

A cloud is a white horse
    Tail streaking, mane flying
    The horse of your wildest dreams.
It is a fluffy pillow
    Lay down your head
    Sleep, baby, sleep.
It is the ground covered with snow
    Golden angels of peace
    Swim gracefully through the snow.
A dove flying through the sky
    Its graceful wings
    Guide it through the air.
A cloud is a sailboat
    The bow rocking, sails flying
    The boat of Cloud 9.

Lisa Bishop

(In this children's literature issue of FOCUS, we include these poems from students in Linda Reynolds' fifth-grade English class at Putnam Elementary School, Marietta, Ohio. "Come With Me" by Linda Zoeller was recently awarded First Place in the state in the poetry category of the Ohio Education and Library Media Association contest. --Ed.)

Five Visions of a Black Stallion

The Black Stallion running across the desert is--

A black coal leaping out of a red bursting fire.

An ebony stone lying against a pale woman's neck.

A furtive pupil in one's eye, looking for danger.

The black keys on a piano gliding under the jazz man's fingers.

The night running into dawn.

Sarah Wickham

Red

Red is--

Sirens screaming
Red leaves rustling in the wind
The crackling of a blazing forest fire
Blushing with embarrassment
Fire red with anger
Fire engines' lights flashing while rushing down the road
The Bibles in our church
A freshly picked rose in the morning sunlight
A hot juicy caramel apple
A freshly picked cherry
The time of day when it gets dim and people go inside.

Jason Erb